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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Faculty of Modern History, Oxford University
Michaelmas Term, 2003 [i.e 2004] (LTS S III 04)

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Wolfson College, Oxford University

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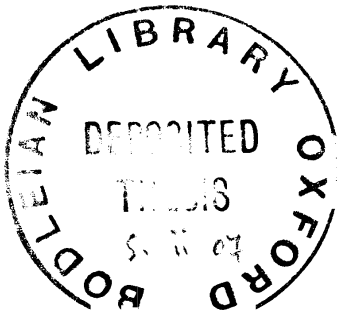

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Abstract

Samira Sheikh, 'State and Society in Gujarat c.1200-1500: The Making of a Region', DPhil Thesis, Oxford 2003. [Le 2004]

The present work closely traces the emergence of a distinctively Gujarati political and cultural world by the fifteenth century, arguing that many of the political, administrative, cultural and religious institutions that are evident in modern Gujarat came into being when the region was unified by force and consensus under the Sultans of Gujarat.

The western province of Gujarat with its extensive coastline became, from the eighth century, the hub of a vibrant network of trade that stretched from the Red Sea to Indonesia and over land to Central Asia and the borders of China. The ports and cities of Gujarat drew merchants, mercenaries, religious figures and fortune-seekers from the Arab world and neighbouring south Asian provinces. Gujarat's general prosperity also attracted mass migrations of pastoralist groups from the north. Unlike previous studies that have tended to treat trade and politics as separate categories with distinct histories, the present research charts the evolving Gujarati political order by juxtaposing political control with networks of trade, religion and contestation over resources.

Large parts of Gujarat were conquered in the late thirteenth century by the armies of the Turkic Sultans of Delhi. With the dissolution of the Delhi Sultanate in the late fourteenth century, the governor of Gujarat declared his sovereignty and inaugurated a line of independent Sultans of Gujarat who continued in power until defeated by the Mughal ruler Akbar in 1572.

From the late twelfth century, Gujarat was the site of proselytising activities of various denominations of missionaries. By the fifteenth century, a wide variety of religious interests were competing for patrons, converts and resources. The highly evolved trading networks radiating out from Gujarat from the eighth century required pragmatic accommodation with successive political formations. Correspondingly, claimants to political power were heavily dependent upon merchants, traders and financiers for military supplies, and in return, offered the trading groups security and patronage. The constantly negotiated relationship between trade and politics was closely linked to the evolution of sects and castes, Hindu, Muslim and Jain. Trade and politics were increasingly organised and expressed in sectarian or community terms. In keeping with some recent literature, my studies suggest that community affiliations in this period were often negotiable and linked to changing status.

The study ends in the late fifteenth century when the Portuguese arrived off the coast of Gujarat. Soon there were new alignments of identity and power as the pastoralist frontier politics of the previous period began to give way to settled Rājpūt courts, complete with bureaucracies, chroniclers and priests. The Sultans of Gujarat were now paramount in the region: wealthy patrons of merchants and religious figures, they were unrivalled in north India for their control of manpower, war animals and weaponry.

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Note on transliteration

There are some unresolved difficulties and complete consistency has not been achieved.

Place names : For all place names such as Gujarat, Ahmadabad, Saurashtra, Delhi and so on, modern English spellings have been used, except when the name is archaic or is used in a transcription from an inscription or text.

Personal names : Those of Perso-Arabic origin have been transliterated according to the scheme in Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, (which is itself a modified version of the scheme used in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*) Those of Indic origin have transliterated according to modern Gujarati or Sanskrit pronunciation. However, I have not succeeded in achieving consistency in the orthography.

Names of modern individuals are rendered in their most common English spelling.

Group and miscellaneous names : Names that are well-known in English such as Hindu, brahmana, sultan and yogi have been rendered according to standard English spellings. Less known and medieval terms such Pratihāra, Ismā'īlī, Bhīl have been transliterated with diacritics.

Names of authors and book titles that are not in English : These have been transliterated into English without diacritical marks for technical reasons.

Dates : Only Common Era dates have been used throughout.

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List of abbreviations

ARIE	Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy
EI	Epigraphia Indica
EI:APS	Epigraphia Indica: Arabic and Persian Supplement
EIM	Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica
GI	*Gulshan-i-Ibrāhīmī*
HIG	Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat
IA	Indian Antiquary
IC	Islamic Culture
IESHR	Indian Economic and Social History Review
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JAS	Journal of Asian Studies
JBMPG	Journal of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JMSUB	Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda
JNSI	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India
JOI	Journal of the Oriental Institute
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
MA	*Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*
MAS	Modern Asian Studies
MS	*Mir'āt-i-Sikandarī*
PAEG	Persian and Arabic Epigraphy of Gujarat
TA	*Tabaqāt-i-Akbarī*

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Introduction

The modern state of Gujarat is a recent creation. It was only in 1960 that Bombay State was divided into Maharashtra and Gujarat on the basis of the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of each.[1] The movement for a separate state of Gujarat derived much energy from the writings and personal efforts of K.M. Munshi (1887-1971), an ardent Gujarati nationalist who made the campaign for statehood a cry for the restoration of the ancient *asmitā* or glory of Gujarat. Munshi was a popular and prolific historical novelist in Gujarati who wrote widely on historical and cultural themes. He was also a politician, a close associate of Vallabhbhai Patel and a prime mover in the construction of a new temple at Somanath. In 1950, this oft-vandalised medieval temple was finally demolished after a cursory archaeological survey and a modern temple built at the site as a symbolic foundation stone of the new Gujarat and indeed, for Munshi, Patel and their adherents on the right wing of the Congress Party, of newly independent India.[2]

Munshi viewed the 'Muslim' and British periods as predominantly painful episodes of occupation that needed to be swept away from popular memory in order to regain pride in the Gujarati identity and he made every effort to attain this objective. He made a consistent argument in his writings for the cultural unity of Gujarat as a concept that developed in the Solanki (Caulukya) period. He was also responsible for disseminating an idea of Gujarat based on the political entity crystallised by the Caulukyas *circa* 1100. For him, Gujarat denoted, firstly, '...the mainland between Mount Ābu and the river Damaṇagangā, distinguishing it from Kachchha or Saurashtra on the one side and Marwar and Malava on the other.'[3] 'In the second and wider sense', he wrote, 'it connotes the much larger linguistic zone in which the language known as modern Gujarati is spoken at the present time.'[4] Thus he had three criteria to justify the existence of the modern state of Gujarat: the existence of a modern linguistic area, a clearly delimited topographical area bounded by natural features such as rivers and mountains and as the clinching

[1] John R. Wood, "British Versus Princely Legacies and the Political Integration of Gujarat," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 (1984).
[2] See K.M. Munshi, *Somnath: the Shrine Eternal* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1952), J.M. Nanavati, R.N. Mehta, and S.N. Chowdhary, *Somnath, 1956: being a report of excavations* (Ahmedabad: Baroda: Dept. of Archaeology, Gujarat State; Dept. of Archaeology and Ancient History, M.S. University of Baroda, 1971).
[3] K.M. Munshi, *Glory that was Gurjara-desa*, 2 vols. (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1958), p.10.
[4] Ibid., p.11.

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argument, the assertion that the political and cultural unity of Gujarat was wrought about eight hundred years previously by the Caulukyas.[5]

Gujarat has received remarkably little scholarly attention in recent years. There has been an attenuation of historical and anthropological inquiry on Gujarat in the last generation, both from within and outside the region. The violence in Gujarat in 2002 left scholars scrambling for works that explain Gujarat's peculiar caste and community configurations. What they have come up with are a clutch of historical and sociological studies, largely from the 1960s and 1970s, that lack historical analysis of caste, community and politics, especially of the pre-colonial period. Further, as colonial records on Gujarat, which was dominated by princely states, tend to be scanty in comparison to say, neighbouring Maharashtra, the more recent history of Gujarat has also largely escaped the scrutiny of historians.

The lack of reliable historical scholarship on Gujarat is made more glaring by the regular evocation of history in Gujarati cultural and political debate. Since the nineteenth century, Gujarati political discourse has evolved a complex network of narratives of inclusion, traditional rights and customary practice, which depend on establishing 'historical' precedents. Caste groups often employ historical narratives to justify their place of residence, local contacts, religious networks and occupations in Gujarat. The Levā Pāṭīdār farming community of central Gujarat has a tradition of having migrated to Gujarat from the Ganga region in the early medieval period in search of military service.[6] The Girnarā and Unevāl brahmanas maintain that they were invited to Saurashtra by twelfth-century rulers.[7] A potent historical invocation is that of the medieval temple of Somanath, its history of vandalisation and renovation translated as a narrative of defeat and regeneration for Hindus. Now that Hindu nationalism has forced an interrogation of histories and traditions all over India, there can be little doubt that medieval history has considerable bearing on contemporary politics.

This neglect of history is puzzling because Gujarat is one of the regions in South Asia that has been continuously settled for almost four millennia. It is the quintessential land of the immigrant, subject to continual waves of settlement by invaders, traders and pastoralists. Located physically at the intersection of a variety of ecological zones, its history reflects the dynamics of all these. It has a history of far-flung maritime links from its long coastline, of desert and

[5] Wood, "British Versus Princely Legacies and the Political Integration of Gujarat," pp. 67-68.
[6] Dahyabhai Lakshmandas Patel, *Vadnagara Kanbini Utpatti ane temno acar-vicar (The origin of the Vadnagara Kanbis and their customs)* (Ahmedabad: 1906), p.14.
[7] Revashankar Shastri, *Uneval Jnyatino Itihas (History of the Uneval Caste)* (Ahmadabad: Sri Uneval Seva Samaj, 1922), p.12, Jivaram Durlabhaji Shukla and M.M. Vyas, *Sri Girinarayan Jnyati-ni Unnati tatha Utpatti* (Bombay: 1917), p.32.

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scrublands suitable only for nomad pastoralists in the north-west, of good agricultural lands in the east and north-east and of dense hilly forest cover in the centre of the Saurashtra peninsula and the eastern hill tracts. It also lies at the intersection of many cultural and economic worlds: it is marginal to classical brahmanical texts yet contains important places of pilgrimage; it has trade links with both north and south India; it was from the eleventh century at the edge of the moving frontier of Turkic expansionism and, of course, it has long belonged to the world of Indian Ocean trade.

The primary reason for the present study therefore must be this neglect in the existing historiography. Even a cursory familiarity with the institutions, texts and remains of medieval Gujarat that survive into the present throw up questions that the available literature cannot answer. The literature on other contemporary medieval regions too is inadequate to explicate Gujarat's history. While political formations in Gujarat exhibit some commonalities with the polities described in recent literature on south India, they are significantly different in other ways. Similarly, descriptions of the agrarian polities of hinterland north India are insufficient for our purposes: politics in Gujarat combined the effects of an expanding agrarian frontier with the vital importance of merchants and martial pastoralists.

It is over four decades since the state of Gujarat was inaugurated. 'Gujarat' and 'Gujarati' are commonplace terms with familiar images and values attached to them. But these values have not always been constant. What *is* Gujarat? If we accept Munshi's contention that Gujarat can be traced back to the political unit forged by the Caulukyas c.1200, how did this unit survive the intervening years ruled by sultans, Rajputs, Mughals, Marathas, the East India Company and scores of princely states? What is the Gujarati linguistic region? How did it come into being and who propagated it? Who are Gujaratis, where did they come from and where did they settle? How was its religious and social life organised? What are Gujarat's geo-physical characteristics and what influence did they have on its history? Who named the region and what were the consequences of this naming?

This study attempts to tackle some of these questions within a specific time period: from the late twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century. The twelfth century had seen the establishment under the Caulukyas of what has elsewhere been called a 'vernacular polity'. The Caulukyas gradually extended a contested form of political control over most of the territory of modern Gujarat including Saurashtra and Kacch. They patronised a variegated intellectual elite, most prominently Jainas who produced a large body of biographical, ritual and aesthetic texts in

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Sanskrit and Apabhraṃśa.[8] Although strictly speaking it cannot be said that Caulukya patronage of Apabhraṃśa texts led to the elaboration of a vernacular polity – regional political statements were expressed in Sanskrit and Apabhraṃśa, both transregional languages – nevertheless, the dominions of the Caulukyas came to be identified as the land of the Gurjaras, *Gurjaradeśa*.[9] This was not at this stage a linguistic category. Apabhraṃśa was used as a literary language over large parts of northern and western India, especially by the Jainas and was not specifically identified with Gujarat or the Caulukyas. It would seem that by the twelfth century, Gurjaradeśa was the land of the Gurjaras, i.e., all those who inhabited Gurjaradeśa, not merely members of the Gurjara tribe. Thus the Caulukyas presided over the invention of a regional entity that far outlasted them.

This study begins from the point when the Caulukya-dominated regional entity had already come into existence and its political control was in decline after the death of Kumārapāla in 1174. By 1201, the Caulukya ruler Bhīma was back in his capital after a devastating attack by a general from the army of Muʿizz al-Dīn Muḥammad in 1197. Although he recovered his capital after the retreat of the Turks, Caulukya power was now clearly on the wane. The flourishing court society and region-wide control of the twelfth century was in disarray as the Caulukyas continued to suffer military defeats. By the mid-thirteenth century they were edged out by former subsidiaries, the Vāghelās, who ruled a small strip of eastern Gujarat in the Caulukya name for the remainder of the century.

The decline of Caulukya rule inaugurated a period of sub-regional political elaboration, one feature of which was the rise of the phenomenon of Rajputisation. Martial pastoralist clans battled each other all over the region to establish small local patrilinies, some of which went on to ally themselves to the Rajput status hierarchy emerging in Rajasthan. Pastoralist clans were also

[8] Sheldon Pollock, "India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): p.71, fn.9. Pollock admits that Apabhraṃśa was also a cosmopolitan language but states that it was never used for political texts after C.E. 300. This is not true of Gujarat, where political articulations by Jainas were sometimes in Apabhraṃśa. There is considerable controversy on the definition of Apabhraṃśa – whether it should be seen as identical to literary Old Gujarati or whether it was a convenient self-definition within texts for all north Indian local literary dialects which were not Sanskrit. In any case, literature in Apabhraṃśa / Old Gujarati / Old Western Rajasthani was not confined to a region. Gujarat under the Caulukyas probably saw the greatest elaboration of Apabhraṃśa literature, but Apabhraṃśa did not articulate regional identity in the way that Tamil did in the Cola country or Telugu under the Kākatīyas. See Richard J. Cohen, "The Apabhraṃśa *Cariu* as Courtly Poem," in *Studies in Early Modern Indo-Aryan Languages, Literature and Culture*, ed. Alan W. Entwistle, et al. (New Delhi: Manohar, 1999). On the transformation of *nāgara* Apabhraṃśa into local variants of western Indian languages from the thirteenth century, see also C. Vaudeville, *Myths, Saints and Legends in Medieval India*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.274-5.

[9] Although the name is usually be traced to the Gurjara pastoralist clan, branches of which settled in Gujarat in the early centuries of the first millennium, it is not clear whether this is an ethnic category. M.R. Majmudar, *Cultural History of Gujarat [From Early Times to Pre-British Period]* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1965), pp.18-20. See also Chapter 1, *infra*.

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moving into Gujarat from Sind and Rajasthan to enter the fray. There was unprecedented mobility of populations throughout Gujarat as new areas were cleared for agriculture or grazing.

Meanwhile, trade along the coastline and overland continued unabated. This was the era of the merchant magnate who dabbled in political power. Merchants, especially those who could manipulate the trade in items of military value such as horses and weaponry, made bids for influence at court or even local sovereignty. The Vāghelās were controlled by powerful Jaina merchant families and a horse trader in Kacch attempted to set himself up as ruler of his town. The port towns housed large colonies of Arab, Persian and local merchants, many of whom had business and political interests in the hinterland.

Revenues from trade made a crucial difference to the the finances of whatever state was in power in Gujarat.[10] The importance of trade tended to impose checks upon periodic inter-group violence not through some automatic homeostatic mechanism, but through pressure exerted on the state. Merchant groups periodically entered politics to help control policy (as during Vāghelā rule in the thirteenth century) but even when power was concentrated in the hands of pastoralist chieftains, the necessity of promoting trade was soon brought home to rulers. Warfare and disruption was inevitable to some extent but was eventually brought in check by the need to safeguard trade.

The settlement and sub-regional political activity of the thirteenth century were followed by another significant Turkic invasion, this time that of generals sent by 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī from Delhi, seeking to acquire control over the lucrative trade routes and manufacture of Gujarat. This time the Vāghelās were driven out and, by 1307, governors from Delhi had been placed in strategic fortresses across Gujarat. Peace was soon re-established and trade continued to flourish. The local Rajput lineages also continued in their territories subject to the payment of tribute and new pastoralist incursions continued. The governorship of Gujarat became a much sought-after post for Delhi courtiers and many were willing to pay substantial bribes to be appointed to Anhilvada or Cambay. By the end of the fourteenth century, the Delhi sultanate was in crisis. Timur's sack of Delhi had left the sultans in no position to control their regional governors. After a period of negotiation and uncertainty in Delhi, the last governor of Gujarat, Ẓafar Khān, declared his sovereignty in 1407.

The descendants of Ẓafar Khān ruled Gujarat for the next century and a half and were responsible for presiding over the invention of institutions of governance and political articulation that had a remarkable longevity and resilience. Over time, the sultans came to exert military and

[10] This may be as true of the Gujarat of the twenty-first century as of the twelfth.

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political control over almost the whole of the territory of modern Gujarat. My study ends in 1511 with the death of Maḥmūd 'Begaḍā' at the high point of the elaboration of the Indo-Muslim vernacular regional state. This was about the time that the Portuguese were beginning to intervene in politics along the coast of western India, thereby adding a new dimension to conflict and political dominion.

Historically, the most important groups in Gujarat were merchants and pastoralists. Rulers were usually former pastoralists, transforming themselves from cattle-rustlers, bandits or pirates into patrons and enforcers of security. 'Merchant' and 'pastoralist' were overarching and at times interchangeable identities : merchants could be itinerant and pastoralists could engage in trade. It was the interaction between the two identities that fuelled the history of the region. Between them, they created the immense productivity and mobility that attracted producers, peasants and religious specialists. The mutual reliance of the two groups was constantly reinforced in the literature of the period: texts put out by rulers referred to the security they enforced to facilitate trade while merchant texts highlighted the influence and security they enjoyed in the kingdom.

In terms of the evolution of a political culture, the period studied here was crucial for the invention of long-lasting institutions of religion, language, administration and trade. Administrative divisions, revenue arrangements and political units established in this period persisted in the face of Mughal and British attempts to overhaul them. With the decline of the early medieval state represented by brahmana-legitimised kings, sacrifice and royal cults, we begin to see the emergence of more familiar castes, sects and religious groups : Vaiṣṇavas, Ismā'īlīs, Jainas, Rajputs, *vāniā* merchant groups and Kaṇbī Pātīdārs. This was also the period of the development of new languages – written and spoken.

Sheldon Pollock's account of the vernacular millennium fails to take into account the role played by the Indo-Muslim polities of north India. For all its limitations, the Delhi sultanate was an attempt to establish transregional rule over the larger part of South Asia at least partly in a vernacular idiom.[11] After its decline, the actual task of vernacularization was taken up by the regional sultanates of north India, most notably in Bengal.[12] Thus while the preliminary articulation of the vernacular, albeit in Apabhraṃśa, was inaugurated in Gujarat by Jaina

[11] The Mughals made a deliberate choice to use Persian as the language of state and literature. At the sultanates of Delhi and other regions, on the other hand, local literary dialects were often promoted. See M. Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics," *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (1998): p.318.

[12] See Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies, 17 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.66.

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intellectuals at the Caulukya court, it was further elaborated by Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries under sultanate rule. This was the period when a plethora of writings were produced in Apabhraṃśa, early Gujarati, Dingal and Gujarī, coexisting with the patronage of literature in Arabic and Persian. While there was a lot of writing by individuals patronised by the state and its courtiers, we also begin to get the first evidence of compositions, especially sectarian and religious ones, from non-court sources.

The period studied is thus one in which language and linguistic formations were elaborated to a great extent. This was also a period that saw a great exposition in the field of religion – again within and without state patronage. As the Caulukyas expanded in the twelfth century, a number of local deities were incorporated into the transregional religious vocabulary. This is particularly evident in inscriptions, many of which mention local deities assimilated as versions of Śiva or Viṣṇu. As the state and its patronage shrank in the thirteenth century, there was a proliferation of cults and religious figures all struggling for patrons and resources. Several immigrant pastoralist groups brought their own deities to Gujarat. They also threw up a number of warrior-heroes and saintly women who were sanctified for their valour and sacrifice. As the state patronage of religion declined, especially in its sacrificial manifestation, we see the evolution of practices of *bhakti* or personal worship. Temples continued to be built and endowed, but by merchants and courtiers rather than the state. These tended to be Jaina or Vaiṣṇava in denomination after the Śaivite monopoly of the Caulukya years.

This was also when Muslim religious figures first began to make inroads into the hinterland. The early conversions to the Ismā'īlī faith in Gujarat date from this period and branches of Ismā'īlī practice continued to gain ground even during the Sunni-dominated sultanate. The sultanate ostensibly inaugurated a period of orthodox Sunni observance presided over by rival ṣūfī orders, but there is little evidence that Sunni beliefs penetrated widely outside court circles. Nor is there much evidence of conversion to Sunni Islam while there are several indications that Ismā'īlī preachers continued to attract converts throughout the sultanate period.

In exploring the politics of the period, I hope to provide a broad picture of settlement, the extension of the agrarian frontier and the development of trade routes in a land that was at once a frontier region and one of the longest-settled regions in South Asia. I shall argue that medieval polities need to be mapped with reference to religion and trade as well as war and agrarian relations. Now that it has repeatedly been established that medieval states – least of all Gujarat – were not de-urbanized or de-monetized, it is also time to take away the insistence on agrarian

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development and demonstrate the enmeshedness of politics with trade.[13] I also hope to demonstrate that the various peculiarities of agrarian, productive and trade arrangements in Gujarat led to unique polities in negotiation with each other. While the historical literature on Gujarat is deeply inadequate, theorization on other regions of South Asia also has limited validity here. Thus while Gujarat had features in common with both south and north India, its location and sheer diversity led to complex and unique political elaborations that offer emendations to the accepted historiography of medieval south Asia.

This dissertation will attempt to delineate some strands of the politics of Gujarat over the three centuries when Gujarat was emerging as a political and linguistic region. I will also examine how the political landscape was differentiated by a variety of religious and sectarian groups competing for resources and legitimation and make an effort to map immigration and settlement, struggles over territory and the evolving networks of trade in response to the strictures imposed by the environment, the climate and natural resources. At base, this is an exercise in mapping : it makes the case that itinerancy and mobility were as crucial to the polity under study as settlement and that the patterns of political formation were related to the tension between mobility and sedentarisation. Through this exercise, I hope to achieve a sense of the political structures of the period and how they led to the rise of a regional identity, local states and embedded political institutions.

Review of sources

The study of medieval Gujarat and of medieval South Asia in general has suffered from the assumption that texts from the period are scanty. However, it soon emerges that there is considerably more source material than one might be led to believe. From Gujarat, the sources that are strictly contemporary with our period include several Persian chronicles and literary works, about 400 published inscriptions in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Old Gujarati, travellers' accounts and scores of historical ballads, plays, biographies and poems in Sanskrit and Apabhramśa. In addition are works in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit on religious traditions and rituals, many of which contain incidental historical information. There is a large body of Jaina literature as well as texts from other religious communities. Chronicles and accounts from later periods also have a wealth of information rarely used by historians.

[13] For a discussion of the limitations of 'Indian feudalism', see B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), Introduction.

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In addition, many structures from the period still exist and there are archaeological reports of varying accuracy on many of them. An estimate of the coins from Gujarat in various collections may be derived from the information that a single hoard of eleventh- to thirteenth-century coins found in Bhinmal contained over a hundred thousand specimens.[14] *Pāliyās* or hero-stones are found in every village and some of the early ones have been published and studied.[15] Information on the Gujarat trade has been found in the Geniza records and in the Fāṭimid and Mamluk chronicles of Egypt. There is similar information in the Yemeni chronicles and those from the Persian Gulf. Princely state histories based on local documentation and clan genealogists and genealogical and historical material collected in the nineteenth century are another valuable source of information.

Although the history of Gujarat has been severely neglected in recent years, this was not always the case. The history and ethnography of Gujarat were among the chief interests of Orientalist scholars in western India, as evidenced in the high proportion of studies on Gujarat in scholarly periodicals such as the *Indian Antiquary* and the *Journal* of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. This followed from the earlier writing of British officials such as James Macmurdo, Alexander Walker and Alexander Forbes in the early nineteenth century.[16] Until the early years of the twentieth century, there was considerable ethnographic research carried out in Gujarat, taking up from where Forbes and Tod had left off. While the latter had confined themselves to the histories of ruling Rajput clans, largely based on information made available to them by court bards, later Indian and British ethnographers consulted village elders and the bards and genealogists of other castes too.[17] Some of the information they gathered went into district-wise surveys to list and characterise every contemporary community for the Bombay Gazetteer and the Census. Separate volumes on the Hindu and Muslim tribes and castes of Gujarat were published. Meanwhile, native states in Gujarat began to publish histories of their dynasties or regions, although early versions of these usually regurgitated information already published in the *Bombay Gazetteer* or by Forbes.

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[14] John Deyell, *Living Without Silver: The Monetary History of Early Medieval North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.125.

[15] Varsha Gaganvihari Jani, *Saurāśtra-nā Pāliyā* (Ahmedabad: 1992), Romila Thapar, "Death and the hero," in *Mortality and Immortality, the Anthropology and Archaeology of Death*, ed. S.C. Humphreys and Helen King (London: Academic Press, 1981).

[16] Alexander Kinloch Forbes, *Ras Mala. Hindoo Annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India*, 2 vols., vol. I (London: 1878), James Macmurdo, *The Peninsula of Gujarat in the Early Nineteenth Century (Journal of a Route through the Peninsula of Guzeraut in the year 1809 and 1810)* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1977).

[17] James McNabb Campbell and Bhimbhai Kirparam, eds., *Gujarat Population: Hindus*, 2 vols., Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IX, Part 1 (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1901).

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While it might be argued that information from colonial sources is irretrievably tainted by Orientalism, I believe one can recover some sense of historical processes from them, provided they are corroborated with contemporary sources. Furthermore, they do not all employ a singular, monolithic 'colonial' viewpoint. On the contrary, they make up an internally differentiated body of literature that reflects a diverse range of political and social objectives on the part of its writers. For example, the myth of the timeless Indian village, headed by a brahmana and missing a king, that derives from post-Permanent Settlement Bengal has no resonances in nineteenth-century Gujarat where the peasant was hard to find and hierarchies of chieftains thick on the ground. Nor did early British writers make the mistake of equating the two. Alexander Forbes, for example, opposed colonial policies to sweep away chieftaincies and 'reduce society to a dead level of labouring ryots' and wrote widely to champion the cause of the chieftains of Gujarat.[18] The use of nineteenth-century sources is particularly useful in Gujarat where the colonial state (and indeed the Mughal state before it) never managed to overhaul completely the pre-existing administrative and political structure of the region and often reinforced it. There may also be a case for arguing with Burton Stein that, 'For too long, considerations of state formation in India have divided on the colonial threshold of history and the British regime in the subcontinent has been treated as completely different from all prior states.'[19] Why then should we be willing to admit Mughal sources for the history of Gujarat while rejecting colonial ones?

In the wake of colonial scholarly efforts and in response to the classifying demands of the decennial census, caste groups and communities began to publish historical, mythological and descriptive information to claim separate and historically validated status in the eyes of the British administration. Some of this material can be compared with similar traditions recorded earlier. In other cases, historical corroboration with other kinds of sources is possible. Moreover, mythical and legendary materials often provide clues to social processes that would not be available from conventional sources, usually Persianate histories and chronicles.

Caste-based claims were also made by brahmana divisions who wrote historical accounts or 'translated' parts of the Sanskrit *Purāṇas* for the benefit of those of their fellows who were losing pride in their tradition and falling prey to divisive forces. At times, detailed accounts were provided, apparently from manuscript sources and family tradition, of migrations, patrons, family feuds and divine blessings. Many of the originary claims set out by brahmana groups were based

[18] A.K. Forbes cited in H.G. Rawlinson, "Alexander Kinloch Forbes: A Memoir," in *Ras Mala: Hindoo Annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India*, ed. H.G. Rawlinson (London: 1921), p.xi.
[19] Burton Stein, "State Formation and Economy Reconsidered: Part One," *Modern Asian Studies* 19, no. 3, Special Issue: Papers Presented at the Conference on Indian Economic and Social History, Cambridge University, April 1984. (1985): p.1.

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on the authority of the Skanda Purāṇa.[20] Sections dealing with the originary myths and praises (*mahātmyas*) of certain shrines (*tīrthas*), of various groups of brahmanas and even of cities were appended to the core text at various times, eventually, it would seem, replacing the original text. Alternatively, the Skanda Purāṇa, in common with several other *Purāṇas*, was a name claimed by a variety of textual traditions in order to claim legitimacy for local castes or shrines. Other sections record migrations, sectarian divisions, patronage and the adoption of different religious practices, which are coded in the form of mythological stories.

The *Purāṇa* genre was adopted or imitated by non-brahmana groups as well as groups seeking to establish themselves as brahmanas.[21] Certain caste *Purāṇas* narrate the genesis of trader groups alongside the story of their family priests or tutelary deities. It is likely that the caste-based claim-making literature of the early twentieth century was in emulation of caste and shrine claims that were made much earlier. Much of Purānic literature may thus represent claims made by groups of brahmanas and the custodians of cults and shrines for the notice of their patrons and the state and to be competitively integrated into the network of Sanskritic civilisation.

Among lower castes, Gujarati ballads and martial epics glorifying deified heroes were sometimes called *purāṇas*.[22] The Rajput princely states on occasion commissioned ministers or prominent court figures to write state histories. This class of accounts was distinct from the Purāṇic literature, which was usually written by brahmanas in Sanskrit or in emulation of Sanskrit literary devices. The princely states usually employed the chronicling tradition of the professional bards that ran parallel to the brahmanical Purāṇic one. Bards and genealogists such as the Cāraṇs, Vahīvancās and Bhāṭs were also employed by other groups to record genealogies and chronicles and to arrange marriage, military and business alliances. Brahmanas performed similar functions at times but professional bards possessed sacral properties that made them indispensable to the political and economic system prior to about 1810.[23] Even when their role as guarantors was superseded, the bards retained their role as genealogists and chroniclers and some of them participated in the caste-claim literature to press their own claims or those of their patrons.

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[20] The earliest manuscripts of a text called the Skanda Purana (fifth-sixth century C.E.) bear little resemblance to the version published by the Sri Venkatesvara Press in 1915. R. Adriaensen, H.T. Bakker, and H. Isaacson, eds., *The Skandapurana, critically edited with prolegomena and English synopsis* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998-), p.2-3.

[21] See the Sāmba Purana on the immigrant sun priests. R.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapuranas*, Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series No. 11 (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1958), p.131.

[22] Veena Das, *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual* (Delhi: OUP, 1977), p.87.

[23] Neil Rabitoy, "The Bhats of British Gujarat," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* XI, no. 1 (1974): p.19.

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When the defining criterion for admission to Rajput status for a martial/pastoralist group became its descent hierarchy, the bards played a significant part in the consolidation of the Rajput identity in their role as genealogists. Descent in sanctioned terms usually required a mythological or historical hero as lineage ancestor and the bards, as ritual or sacral guarantors, could provide the necessary genealogies. It would seem that the brahmanas were only peripherally involved in this process of the invention of genealogies; in the early stages of assimilation into Rajput identity, bards performed many of the functions of ritual priests and genealogists, while older-established or prestige groups tended to have a brahmana as clan priest who was distinct in status and role from the bard. This differentiation has links with the increasing brahmanization of the Rajput groups from the fifteenth century and their gradual distancing from the goddess-worship which was intrinsically connected with the bards. This evolution of identity also owed something to the interface with Muslim rulers. It is possible to speculate that the valorisation of the Rajputs was a consequence of the attempts of Muslim as well as bardic chroniclers to make their protagonists out to be prideful kings instead of livestock-herding chieftains. The advent, with the Indo-Muslim courts, of new forms of literacy, new languages and new ways of disseminating information – the chronicles, the administrative structure, the role of propagandists such as the ṣūfīs or Ismā'īlī missionaries – also could have influenced the rise to prominence and, indeed, the idiom of the bards.

Less prominent martial or pastoralist groups who called themselves Rajput commissioned histories to prove their links to established Rajput clans or to publicise charters or grants that gave them control over their lands. In the early twentieth century, farming communities, especially the Kaṇbīs and Pātīdārs of the fertile lands of eastern Gujarat, were prolific with pamphlets, both to carve out separate *jñāti*(sub-caste) identities among themselves and to claim an ancient *kṣatriya* past. Such groups employed bards to write their histories or put together information in the form of historical pamphlets. The employment of bards was itself an attempt to emulate Rajput practice. Even untouchable communities who claimed an ancient kingly past possessed affiliated bards to record their histories and traditions.

There were thus four main strands of historical recording in medieval Gujarat. Rajput clans and groups claiming *kṣatriya* status were remembered in genealogies, ballads and chronicles preserved by professional bards and poets in the form of manuscripts, oral testimony or performative tradition. Brahmanas and groups that relied on brahmanical legitimation such as certain merchant groups, tended to employ the *Purāṇa* genre, which coded the rights and claims of groups of people, shrines or sects in the form of mythological stories. Next is the chronicling

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and biographical tradition of the Jainas which recorded the exemplary lives of important Jainas and their patrons. The fourth tradition, one that has been most exploited by modern historians, is the Persianate tradition of history writing. This was still practised in the nineteenth century, as in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Soraṭh* written by the Nāgar brahmana minister of Junagadh. Persianate history has generally been considered the most reliable source of political information and was employed for corroborative purposes by Forbes and the compilers of the *Bombay Gazetteer* and, in emulation of them, by many of the writers of caste-claim pamphlets.

These traditions were not mutually exclusive and at times relied on one another's authority, coexisting for several centuries. Thus Persian writers often use the tag-line 'it is written in the books of the Hindus that...' while Jaina writers make occasional references to Hindu works. In the heyday of the Gujarat sultanate and during Mughal rule, bardic and Purāṇic record-keeping served many of the same functions as under British government, the most important of which was to record group histories and present claims for favour or patronage to the state. From the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, it would seem that bards played a more important role. As genealogists and guarantors, they brokered a great transition from a predominantly pastoralist society interspersed with merchant-dominated towns to a genuine court society in which the sultan of Gujarat was the overlord of a number of subsidiary chieftains who now had courts and priests. The details of this transition are recorded in the bardic accounts collected in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and from some of the caste-claim and princely state histories.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to take an inclusive approach to sources. Although it is impossible to be comprehensive, there has been an attempt to juxtapose the major sources from all categories in order to get a composite idea of territory, settlement and politics from all sources and for all groups who appear in the sources.

Historiography

The literature on medieval Gujarat is scanty and outdated and, at times, politically contentious. For Hindu nationalist writers such as K.M. Munshi and A.K. Majumdar, the Turkic conquest of Gujarat in the late thirteenth century was the end of civilisation.[24] The subsequent ignominious period of Hindu 'defeat' was considered best forgotten. The works of these writers have formed the basis of subsequent history in Gujarati as well as of school and university textbooks and continue to dominate local historiography.

[24] A.K. Majumdar, *The Chaulukyas of Gujarat* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1956), p.213, Munshi, *Glory*, passim.

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After A.K. Forbes' *Ras Mala* (1848) and J.M. Campbell's historical section of the Bombay Gazetteer, M.S. Commissariat's monumental *History of Gujarat* (1938) is still the indispensable starting point for inquiry into the period. The next major works on medieval Gujarat were monographs by S.C. Misra and S.A.A. Tirmizi.[25] Misra, a north Indian scholar trained in the nationalist historiographical tradition of Allahabad, recognised the primary importance of the Persian chronicles for political history and made thorough use of them for his study of political factions and military campaigns in Gujarat under the Delhi sultans and the early independent sultans. Although he used Jaina and published bardic works for corroboration, he could ignore the Gujarati nationalist project of privileging the 'Rajput period' and its source materials and align himself with the larger nationalist history-writing effort. Tirmizi also relied heavily on Persian chronicles to construct an accurate and rigorous narrative of the Gujarat sultanate.

Other accounts have treated the beginning of the European trading interface with India as the beginning of their story. The arrival of the Portuguese off the western coast of the peninsula *circa* 1500 seemed a convenient beginning to sketch the backdrop of colonialism in India. M.N. Pearson's *Merchants and Rulers of Gujarat* (1976) reflected the growing historical interest in the 1970s in the Indian Ocean trade and the effects of European incursions on Indian politics. This work was also part of the effort to sideline political history in favour of studies of trade and exchange – it denied, for example, that the Gujarat sultans were much concerned with the trade off their coasts – and used largely Portuguese material from the sixteenth century. This work was part of a trend in coastal studies of trade which had the unfortunate effect of marginalising political history. Consequently, no significant political history of Gujarat has been written in the last three decades.

Another reason for the neglect of medieval Gujarat and, indeed, of medieval studies in general is the fact that the period is not seen to have direct bearing on present-day politics, except in its appropriation by retrogressive and socially divisive agencies. Indeed, medieval history as a whole, especially periods of encounter with the Muslims, is seen as inherently problematic. Issues

[25] S.C. Misra, *The Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat: A history of Gujarat from 1298 to 1442* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1963), S.A.I. Tirmizi, "Gujarat and Khandesh," in *The Delhi Sultanat (AD 1206-1526)*, ed. Mohammad Habib and K.A. Nizami, A Comprehensive History of India (New Delhi: Indian History Congress, People's Publishing House, 1993), S.A.I. Tirmizi, *Some Aspects of Medieval Gujarat* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968).

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such as conversion, violence and religious identity are still politically fraught and do not receive much attention or are treated with careful political neutrality.[26]

In some important ways, this study draws on Richard Eaton's work which attempts to explain the phenomenon of the rise of Islamic rule in Bengal over a 600-year span by linking it with the extension of rice cultivation over the region. Here I do not have a comparable singular proposition to offer. Although the rise of Muslim political rule is examined, Islam had been present in Gujarat for about 500 years before the start-point of this study. Secondly, there is no singular and traceable phenomenon such as the extension of rice cultivation in Gujarat. Instead we have much messier incursions of waves of pastoralists and subsequent internal quarrels to document.

Cynthia Talbot has examined the relationship between agrarian expansion, settlement and religion through an exploration of Kākatīya temple inscriptions.[27] In Andhra, temple inscriptions made up a representative sample, in that endowments to temples were the regular mode of signalling settlement and prosperity at least for a clearly differentiated part of the population. However, for Gujarat, there is no comparable corpus of temple inscriptions to analyse. Further, in our period, this is complicated by the fact that donations to temples tailed off in the thirteenth century and did not pick up until the Vaiṣṇava temple-building movements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There were still inscriptions on *pāliyā*s (hero-stones), wells and other secular structures but Muslim rule and religious redefinition meant that large-scale legitimatory temples were no longer being built by merchants or rulers.

In terms of method, the most instructive analysis of western India is found in B.D. Chattopadhyaya's collection of studies on early medieval Rajasthan.[28] His accounts of the rise of the Rajputs and the relationship of trade and periodic markets with political developments were among the studies that contested the Indian feudalism theory through a careful study of contemporary sources. Unfortunately for the purposes of the present study, his studies end around 1200, leaving subsequent political and economic developments unexplored. Another useful

[26] There are now significant exceptions to this rule, including the writings of Richard Eaton and Philip Wagoner although none yet that pertain to Gujarat. Eaton, *Rise*, Phillip B. Wagoner, *Tidings of the King: A Translation and Ethnohistorical Analysis of the Rayavacakamu* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

[27] Cynthia Talbot, *Precolonial India in Practice: Society, Region and Identity in Medieval Andhra* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[28] Chattopadhyaya, *Making*. See especially Chapters 3, 4, 8.

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monograph is D.H.A. Kolff's study of the military labour market in north India.[29] This study offers several pointers to the phenomenon of military servitude in the regional sultanates in the fifteenth century. It also helps explicate the question of the Rajputs and their rise to political prominence in terms of the transformation of pastoralist groups into militarised chieftaincies. Another study of Rajput kinship, albeit in the Mughal period, is N. Ziegler's exposition of the complex web of marriage alliances, inheritance patterns and political power.[30] This offers several pointers for the analysis of similar patterns in Gujarat.

Works on South India by Burton Stein, David Ludden, Talbot and others and on Bengal by Richard Eaton have shown the way for the historical geography of medieval India.[31] All these studies are exercises in mapping territory and its occupation by various groups and attempt to understand the nature of politics in these circumstances. However, each of them works with a particular central question. While Eaton's book attempts to tackle the problematic of conversion to Islam in the Ganga delta region, Talbot's explores the Kākatīya polity through a study of temple endowment inscriptions. Ludden's work on the other hand is a long-term study of settlement and agriculture in a single district.

The present research uses aspects of all these approaches but there are significant differences. First, the Gujarat economy and sultanate were more complex than Talbot's Kākatīyas in terms of the size of the economy, the diversity of cultures and the importance of the region. While Talbot attempts to evolve a complete picture of a limited elite engaged in political intervention partly through the act of building or making endowments to temples, this is not my aim here. Chattopadhyaya's work is focused solely on Rajputs and bypasses the interactivity of cultures, although the processes he identifies form the core of the present study. Nor do I attempt to explain a single remarkable phenomenon, such as that of conversion to Islam. I do not offer explanations of conversion to Islam in Gujarat – if indeed there was widespread conversion in our period – or relate such conversions to the moving agrarian frontier. Like Eaton, I study an Indo-Muslim polity but here it is engaged in complex negotiations with locally evolving pastoralist

[29] Dirk H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*, 1st ed., University of Cambridge Oriental Publications No. 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[30] Norman P. Ziegler, "Some Notes on Rajput Loyalties during the Mughal Period," in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. J.F. Richards (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[31] A. Appadurai, "Kings, Sects and Temples in South India, 1350-1700," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* XIV, no. 1 (1977), James Heitzman, *Gifts of power: lordship in an early Indian state* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), David Ludden, *Peasant History in South India* (Princeton University Press, 1985), George W. Spencer, "Temple Money lending and Livestock Distribution," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* V, no. 3 (1968), Burton Stein, "Circulation and the Historical Geography of Tamil Country," *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXVII, no. 1 (1977).

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polities. The crucial difference with Eaton is the focus on the relationship between politics, the economy and religion. While Eaton takes a long-term approach to his problematic, I study the politics of the establishment of the Gujarat sultanate. This is, therefore, a study of a medieval polity in a period of transition which led up to the formation of a regional rulership.

Plan of the chapters

Chapter 1 **The Regions of Gujarat, c. 100-1200**

The first chapter will take up the topography of Gujarat, its definition as a political territory, society and trade and an outline of religious developments before the twelfth century. The political region of Gujarat, with frontiers roughly similar to modern ones, had an independent existence from the twelfth century. There was a continually contested relationship between the prosperous eastern mainland and the Saurashtra peninsula in which the east usually held the advantage. The arid peninsula was largely pastoralist and the fertile east was where significant agriculture and trade took place. There is insufficient emphasis in the historiography on Gujarat on overland trade as compared to the sea trade. Some of the overland trade routes will be traced here, with a discussion of early trade.

Chapter 2 **Settlement and authority in eastern Gujarat, c.1200-1500**

This chapter will discuss political formations and trade in the consistently prosperous eastern strip of Gujarat as the region between the Caulukya capital of Anhilvada Patan and the coastal port of Cambay became the most sought-after political territory between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century. It will make the argument that overseas and overland trade and local manufacture were inextricably bound up with local political authority, which both exploited and safeguarded them. In opposition to current assumptions, this chapter will attempt to show that political power in Gujarat was based significantly upon relations with trade and not solely on the exploitation of a sedentary peasantry. Patterns of urban and rural settlement in eastern Gujarat will be related and an attempt will be made to describe the polity of the late fifteenth century which achieved a balance between settlement and mobility for the mutual benefit of both sultans and merchants.

Chapter 3 **Pastoralism, trade and settlement in Saurashtra and Kacch**

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were marked by large-scale immigration of pastoralist groups into the Saurashtra peninsula and Kacch from the north and north-west. These groups

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struggled against each other to carve out territories, exploit the pilgrim traffic to shrines such as Somanath and Girnar and tax the trade from the numerous ports of the region. This struggle resulted in a political order with many similarities with those of neighbouring Rajasthan and Sind. By the fifteenth century, many of these groups had sedentarised and their loosely-formulated pastoralist kinship organisation began to give way to state formations, backed by the genealogical legitimation provided by the bardic communities. As these pastoralists began to claim a status as Rajputs in the fifteenth century, ritual functions began to be taken on by immigrant brahmanas in a Sanskritic idiom. Concurrently, the more successful groups began to shed aspects of their pastoralist past, including ambiguous religious identities and affiliations to heterodox varieties of Islam, in favour of reconstructed Sanskritic legitimation. The chapter will describe aspects of this transformation of pastoralist groups into Rajputs and their necessary negotiations with trading groups and the sultans in the east. Although most of Saurashtra and Kacch were conquered by the sultans of Gujarat by the late fifteenth century, local chieftains were often allowed to retain virtual autonomy in return for nominal subject-status and payment of tribute. By the late fifteenth century, most of them were gradually absorbed into the political system of the sultans based in eastern Gujarat.

Chapter 4 **Religion, politics and patronage in a settling society**

Religious affiliation had considerable importance in the political system of thirteenth to fifteenth century Gujarat. This was a period when Sanskritic religion was spreading out to encompass various immigrant groups from the north-west while simultaneously many of the same groups were the target of Muslim, especially Ismā'īlī missionaries. Over time, there is evidence that affiliation to Buddhism, solar worship and various animistic cults were being replaced by brahmanical Śaivism, which itself, by the late fourteenth century, received a challenge from emergent neo-Vaiṣṇavism. There were significant migrations into Gujarat of brahmana groups who found patrons among local chieftains and merchants. Meanwhile, Jaina communities continued to play an important part in the economic and political networks of Gujarat, especially in urban areas. Several ṣūfīs and Muslim scholars found their way to Gujarat, more so after the foundation of the Gujarat sultanate. Local cults, deities, hero-figures and saints also arose from a non-Sanskritic matrix of practices and beliefs.

The chapter will discuss changing religious affiliations in Gujarat, their political impact, the role of the state in dealing with religious groups and the role of religious groupings in the organisation of trade. This will include a discussion of the importance of religion and religious

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vocabulary for the politics of the period. The theme of conversion to Islam and to other sects and the political importance of religious categories will be taken up. The chapter will also take issue with the notion that cultural and political syncretism were manifestations of general goodwill between communities by pointing out some of the political and social strategies employed to achieve such 'syncretism'.

Chapter 5 **Court and state : evolution of a court society, c. 1390-1511**

The final chapter will be an analysis of the 'high' Gujarat sultanate and will end with the death of Maḥmūd Begaḍā in 1511, coincidentally also the time when the Portuguese began to pose a serious threat to the political and economic system of Gujarat. This chapter will take up the political and administrative measures of the sultanate and their implications for our understanding of pre-colonial states. Some of the measures instituted by the sultans proved very tenacious and persisted through Mughal rule and even into the nineteenth century. There will be a discussion of the peculiar polity of alliance and compromise that the sultans presided over. It will be suggested that the formation of the 'Great Tradition' of Rajput identity, which had begun in this period, was not an internal question of identity but part of a reciprocal relationship of legitimation between the sultans and local chieftains, which anticipated a similar relationship between the Rajputs and the Mughals in the seventeenth century. There will also be an attempt to problematise questions of territory, frontiers and political conflict. This will involve a study of the structure of the army, recruitment and supplies and the relationship of the sultans with trade and traders in the fifteenth century.

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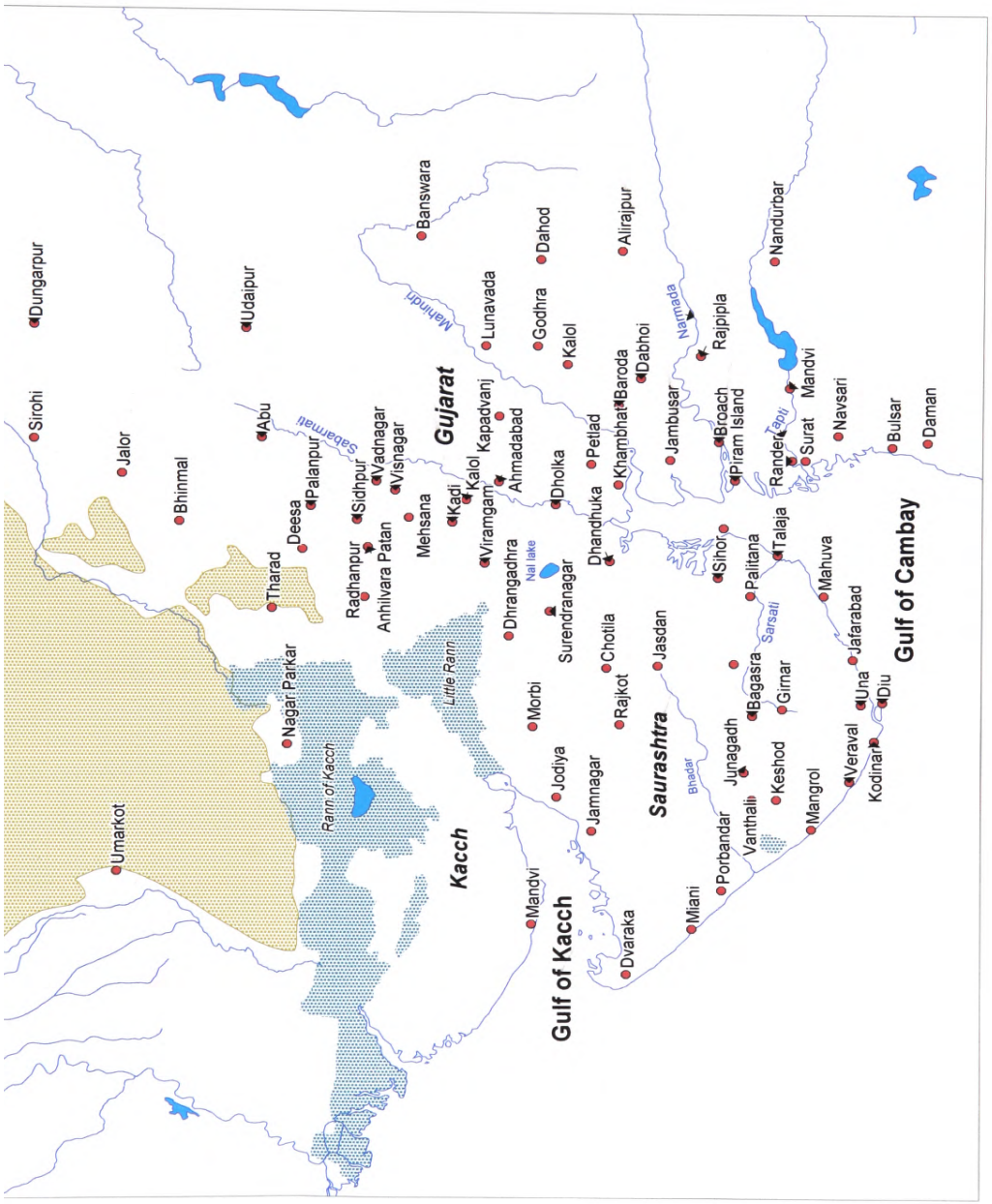

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2003 -State and Society in Gujarat c 1200-1500 (1005)

Chapter 1 **The regions of Gujarat, c. 100-1200**

While the rest of the present study examines aspects of the politics of Gujarat after it had been forged by the Caulukyas, this chapter will explore the larger units, zones and frontiers that existed formerly. Gujarat is a political region derived out of a number of topographical and climatic zones ranging from fertile plains and forested hills to arid desert lands. The overarching political formations of the Caulukyas and sultans were interspersed by and coexisted with scores of smaller subdivisions. These units were bounded by a long coastline dotted with port towns, many of which were independently governed by merchants. The region was also subject to constant immigration: at times the north and north-west were virtually a moving frontier of immigration. Groups of different kinds made their way into and around the region, settling in the countryside, populating towns, clearing agricultural lands and establishing routes for trade and pilgrimage. Although it is not possible to estimate figures, the increase in settlements indicates that the population must have grown considerably from the eleventh century onwards. By the end of the twelfth century, large tracts of the region were settled and familiar to travellers, soldiers and traders and the Caulukyas had established a symbolic sovereignty over most of its territory.

Etymology and the region

The term Gujarat, it is widely acknowledged, derives from the Gurjaras or Gujjaras, clans of 'cattle-rearers, husbandmen and soldiers' who settled in or passed through large parts of north and north-west India from about the first century C.E.[1] It is a version of the Prakrit Gujjara-raṭṭā or Gujjaraṭṭā, subsequently Sanskritised to Gurjara-rāṣṭra, the land of the Gurjaras.[2] Branches of these clans settled in eastern Rajasthan, Malwa and Gujarat, possibly as subsidiaries of the Guptas. The term Gurjara as an ethnic prefix came to be used by the sixth century, as with the Gurjara brahmanas.[3] It was also used as a regional marker for several separate territories. Chinese

[1] James McNabb Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, vol. I, Part 1: *History of Gujarat* (Bombay: 1896; reprint, *History of Gujarat (Ancient, Medieval, Modern)*, Vintage Books, Gurgaon, 1986), p.2.
[2] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.19. The etymology of the term is debatable, but it is certain that the Sanskrit *Gurjara-rāṣṭra* of Caulukya texts post-dates the Prakrit *Gujjaraṭṭā* found in Gurjara Pratihāra inscriptions such as the inscription of VS. 916 of Kakkuka at Ghatiala. D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing upon Indian History and Civilization from 6-18th Century AD*, 2 vols., vol. I (Calcutta: 1942), no.12.
[3] B.N. Puri, *The History of the Gurjara Pratiharas*, 2nd rev. ed. (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1986), p.vii.

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travellers mention the land of *Kiu-che-lo* (Gujara/Gurjara) to the north of Valabhi and north-west of Ujjain, with its capital at Pi-lo-mi-lo (usually read as Bhinmāl).[4] A Gurjara kingdom was established in Nandipuri in southern Gujarat which flourished from 589 to 735 C.E. The 'Gurjara' Pratihāras rose to prominence in the eighth century. Their territories in central and eastern Rajasthan were sometimes called *Gurjaratrā-bhūmi*.[5] Contemporary Arab travellers knew the territory of the Pratihāras as al-Juzr or al-Jurz, recognisable transliterations of Gurjara.[6]

Most texts from this period refer to the hinterland of modern Gujarat as Ānartta, southern Gujarat as Lāṭa and the peninsula as Saurāṣṭra. The Arabs knew Gujarat largely from its great ports, Kambāya or Cambay being the most prominent of them. They also recognised the term Lāṭa : Al-Bīrūnī mentions 'Lārdes' in south Gujarat.[7] The Arabs' term for the sea between western India and Oman, *Baḥr al-Larwī*, was derived from Lāṭa.[8] The territory of Gujarat was variously classified as belonging to Al-Hind and Al-Sind. Later, the interior of Gujarat was referred to by its capital – Nahrwāla, a version of Anhilvada.

The term Gurjara as a prefix to describe the territories now occupied by Gujarat was not widely used until the rule of the Caulukyas. It is not clear why they should have adopted the Gurjara clan name to describe their territories.[9] From the reign of Siddharāja Jayasiṃha (1094-1193), the terms *Gurjara-maṇḍala* or *Gurjara-bhūmi* signified territories in which Caulukya political control had been established. These included North Gujarat, parts of Mevad and the eastern strip of territory from Anhilvada Patan to Cambay. After Siddharāja's wide-ranging conquests in the early twelfth century, Gurjara-maṇḍala included Malwa and southern Rajasthan in addition to Kacch and the peninsula of Saurashtra.[10] These were incorporated into the administrative structure as *maṇḍala*s, provinces. While Malwa and southern Rajasthan were later

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[4] Samuel Beal, *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World, Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629)*, 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1884), Vol II pp. 269ff. Beal reads Pi-lo-mi-lo as Barmer, but this has been discredited. See Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.3, fn. 5.

[5] Puri, *Gurjara Pratiharas*, pp.8-9. Several inscriptions from the eighth and ninth centuries use the term *Gurjaratrā bhūmi* for part of the Pratihāra territories.

[6] S. Maqbul Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations, An Account of India's Relations with the Arab World from Ancient upto Modern Times* (Bombay: 1969), p.96.

[7] Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.507, E. Sachau, *Alberuni's India: an account of the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, Trübner's Oriental Series (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1910; reprint, 1964), p.97.

[8] Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, p.144.

[9] One possibility is that they saw themselves as the successors of the Pratiharas. The first ruler, Mūlarāja (c. 941-996), may have been in their service.

[10] H.D. Sankalia, *Studies in the Historical and Cultural Geography and Ethnography of Gujarat: Places and peoples in inscriptions of Gujarat: 300 B.C.-1300 A.D*, Deccan College Monograph Series (Delivered as Thakkar Vassonji Madhavji Lectures, University of Bombay, 1944) (Poona: 1949), p.30.

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lost, Caulukya political control over the peninsula continued to be exercised, at least nominally, until 1296.

The terms Gurjara or Gūjar persisted in community and occupational names, such as those of the Gūjar *vāṇiās* or traders, potters, carpenters, goldsmiths and so on. These indicated the region inhabited by the groups rather than claims to descent from the 'original' Gūjars. Later, they could also indicate the linguistic identity of a given group.

The use of 'Gurjara-bhūmi' and 'Gurjaraṭṭā' for the Caulukya dominions became the standard terms used by administrators to refer to the entire region, often including the provinces of Saurashtra and Kacch. In the Persian chronicles of the Delhi sultanate, the terms 'Gujarat' and 'Nahrwāla' for Anhilvada Patan, the Caulukya capital, are both used for the region. By the time of its incorporation as a province of the Delhi sultanate in the early thirteenth century, 'Gujarat' had been accepted as a convenient expression for the entire administrative unit, usually including South Gujarat.[11] This unit was largely based in eastern Gujarat with tenuously-held outposts in Saurashtra and the eastern hills bordering Malwa. The governors sent out from Delhi ruled for a little over a century (1297-1402), after which the political unit of Gujarat became distinct and independent under the sultans of Gujarat. It was in the 1480s, well into the rule of the seventh sultan, Maḥmūd Begaḍā 'Gujarātī', that military and political control was re-established over the whole of the territories of modern Gujarat, with the addition at times of parts of Malwa, southern Rajasthan and the southern coastal lands almost to Bombay.

The topographic regions of Gujarat

In terms of land use and settlement patterns, the region of Gujarat falls into four categories – mainland, peninsula, coast and desert. R.L. Singh distinguishes four physiographic divisions of Gujarat: the Rann, the Kacch peninsula, peninsular Gujarat or Saurashtra and the Gujarat alluvial plain.[12] For our purposes, the scantily populated Rann and the Kacch peninsula will be treated as a single unit. It is not surprising that these physiographic divisions coincide with the broad political units of Gujarat. Each of these regions was subject to different histories of settlement and consequent political organisation.

The oldest layer of settlement in the region was along the distributaries of the Indus in Kacch and Saurashtra. Persistent myths associate the western coast of the Saurashtra peninsula with the Kṛṣṇa story, suggesting that cattle-herding pastoralists lived in the area in the first

[11] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.19.
[12] R.L. Singh, *India: A Regional Geography* (Varanasi: National Geographic Society of India, 1971), p. 882.

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millennium BC. Aśoka's rock-edict indicates that the Girnar region in the centre of the peninsula was inhabited and Buddhism was being propagated there by the third century B.C.E. West Asians and people from the hinterland gradually settled along the coast. In the Gupta period, Bhrigukaccha (near modern Bharuch) became the main port of western India. The Girnar region continued to be inhabited and Rudradāman, the Kṣatrapa governor of Saurashtra, built a major reservoir there. The next area to be settled was Valabhi and the south-eastern corner of the Saurashtra peninsula. This was also one of the early strongholds of Jainism in western India. Gradually towns and settlements came up along most of the coastline and the eastern strip of Gujarat, leaving only the arid north-eastern part of Saurashtra and some heavily forested parts of central and eastern Gujarat.

1. The Gujarat mainland

The Nal lake in central Gujarat is the remnant of a water body that used to stretch in the rainy season from the Little Rann to the Gulf of Cambay, virtually separating the Saurashtra peninsula from the mainland. It was only after the earthquake of 1819 that the channel was closed. The physical division imposed by the water body had implications for the political organisation of eastern Gujarat and Saurashtra. To the west of the Nal creek is the peninsula of Saurashtra, arid, scrub-forested and cultivable only in parts. To the east lie the fertile plains of Gujarat drained by the Sabarmati, Mahi, Narmada, Tapi and their tributaries descending from the rocky plateau of central India and becoming wide and sluggish in the plains as they flow towards the Arabian Sea.

Eastern Gujarat is a corridor region – a fertile, populous space carved out between natural boundaries to facilitate trade and mobility. It lies along one of the most important trade routes from north India to the coast, a fact that has had tremendous consequences for its history. While there is an alternative route through Malwa, the Gujarat route tended to be favoured in our period and a string of urban settlements sprang up along the way. Gujarat is entered through the Abu hills in the north which roughly separate it from Mevad. The settlements and fertile areas are bounded on the east and south by heavily forested mountain regions which cut them off from the Malwa plateau, areas that have historically been a threat to the settled rulers and inhabitants of the plains.

Although central Gujarat around Ahmadabad and Kheda is highly fertile, it does not seem to have been widely cleared and cultivated before the tenth century when stepwells and reservoirs began to be constructed to aid agriculture. The chief crops were cotton, indigo and foodgrains. Cotton was also grown in the Sabarmati valley and in the black soil region north of Cambay.

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Arab travellers paint a rosy picture of coastal Gujarat from the tenth century. Al-Masʿūdī (915) remarked upon the Gulf of Cambay 'whose shores were covered with villages, estates and gardens wooded and stocked with palm and date groves full of peacocks, parrots and other Indian birds.'[13]

In the mid-tenth century, a Persian visitor listed the great port towns of the coast: Samur, Sindān, Subāra and Kanbāya (Cambay), in which he said, Muslims and Hindus lived. There was a Friday-mosque (*mazgit-i-ādhina*) and an idol-temple in each. In Cambay, shoes were produced for export. Nearby was a mountain where bamboo, rattan palms, pepper and coconut were to be found.[14] Ibn Hawqal (968-996) also remarked upon the local fruit – mangoes, coconuts and lemons. About 1300, ʿAbd Allāh Wassāf waxed eloquent about the region:

> Gujarat, which is commonly called Kambayat, contains 70,000 villages and towns, all populous, and the people abound in wealth and luxuries. In the course of the four seasons of the year seventy different species of beautiful flowers grow within that province. .... The air is healthy and the earth picturesque, neither too warm nor too cool, but in perpetual spring. The winter cultivation is brought about only through the moistness of dew, called *barasi.* When that harvest is over they begin summer cultivation, which is dependent upon the influence of the rain. The vineyards in this country bring forth blue grapes twice a year; and the strength of the soil is so great that the cotton plants spread their branches like willows and plane trees, and yield produce for several years successively.[15]

The main rivers, the Narmada, Tapi and Mahi cut narrow gorges through hillsides and widened out only near the coast. Historically, they were not easy to navigate and the land-route was preferred for trade. Nevertheless, a significant volume of trade moved from the hinterland of Malwa to the port of Bhrigukaccha, the greatest port of western India in the early centuries of the common era. Bhrigukaccha, at the mouth of the Narmada, gradually became unnavigable because of excessive siltation which left it several kilometres inland. By the tenth century, it was replaced as the chief port of the region by Cambay, located at the head of the Gulf and the mouth of a wayward branch of the Indus.

In the seventh and eighth century, south Gujarat was part of the dominions of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mankhed, while modern Rajasthan and some of north Gujarat fell within the territories of the Gurjara-Pratihāras. At this stage, little of Gujarat's territory was cleared or settled although trade was already an important feature of the region. In the ninth century, parts of

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[13] Abu al-Hasan `Ali al-Mas`udi, *The Meadows of Gold: The Abbasids*, trans. Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone (London/New York: Kegan Paul International, 1989), p.99.
[14] Vladimir Fedorovich Minorsky, *Hudud al-`Alam 'The Regions of the World': A Persian Geography 372 A.D.-982 A.D.*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, New Series, XI (London: Luzac and Co., 1937), p.88.
[15] *Tazjiyat al-Amsar* trans. in H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, vol. III (1969; reprint, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad), p.32.

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northern Gujarat were ruled by the Cāvaḍās. They gave way to the Caulukyas who presided over a expanding territory that included at its height most of Gujarat and parts of Saurashtra and Kacch.

The territorial control of the Caulukyas began about 942 when Mūlarāja I acquired control over some districts in north Gujarat, the *Sārasvata-maṇḍala* including parts of Mehsana, Radhanpur and Palanpur districts. By the time of his death, the kingdom stretched from Lāṭa or south-east Gujarat to Mount Abu in the north. According to later chroniclers, Mūlarāja also defeated the kings of Saurashtra and Kacch but the nature of the control he exercised after the victory is not clear since his descendants are again found fighting these chieftains. Mūlarāja had his capital at the Cāvaḍā city of Anahilapataka or Anhilvada, and his dominion included the Viramgam, Chansana, Patan and Mehsana districts. In the south, he conquered the whole of Lāṭa up to the Narmada.

Mūlarāja's descendant Bhīma was faced within a year of his accession (in 1025) by the invasion of Maḥmūd of Ghazna who was hardly challenged in his march towards Somanath, either in Anhilvada, Modhera or Delvada.[16] After the sack of Somanath, Maḥmūd quickly retreated, again meeting with no resistance. Bhīma's son Karṇa is credited in the bardic accounts with the defeat of the Bhīls of central Gujarat between the Rann of Kacch and the Sabarmati river. His son Siddharāja Jayasiṃha, crowned in 1094, was the most famous king of the dynasty. He defeated the king of Girnar, Rā Khengār, and reduced the Cāhamānas of Naddula and Śākambharī to the status of feudatories. He also achieved decisive victories in Malwa, over the Paramāras of Bhinmāl, Sindhurāja of Sind and 'Barbaraka'. The large number of conquests increased Siddharāja's territories and the Caulukya kingdom acquired its maximum span, with Saurashtra, southern Rajputana, the Sambhar area and parts of Malwa including Dhar and Ujjain coming within the kingdom.[17]

The next ruler was Kumārapāla (1143-1174) who achieved renown not for his conquests but for his adoption and propagation of Jainism. Kumārapāla's territories extended in the south to the Vindhyas and at least as far as the Tapti, to the west, to Saurashtra, to the north roughly from Chitor to Jaisalmer, including parts of Udaipur and Jodhpur and to the east beyond Bhilsa.

Kumārapāla's grandson, Mūlarāja II came to power in 1176. The chronicles single out his reign for the defeat that he handed out to Hammīra (Amīr), the lord of the Turuṣkas, i.e., Muʿizz

[16] Interestingly, this raid is nowhere mentioned by the 'Hindu' sources, so that the campaign has to be gleaned entirely from the Persian chronicles.
[17] Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, pp.82-83.

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al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Sām in 1178.[18] The latter was routed near Anhilvada (Nahrwāla in the Persian chronicles) and had great difficulty in returning to Ghazna. The Caulukyas then lost territory over the years and also faced internal conflict. In 1197, the slave general of Mu'izz al-Dīn, Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg was able to avenge his master's defeat by sacking Nahrwāla. Soon after, the kingdom passed into the hands of Vāghelās, former courtiers to the Caulukyas. In the course of the thirteenth century, Vāghelā control over the sprawling Caulukya territories shrank to a small region of eastern Gujarat, although nominal sovereignty continued to be exercised in parts of Saurashtra and north Gujarat.

Meanwhile, trade continued unabated and towns continued to expand along the trade routes. Around the new settlements there was also an expansion of cultivation, as is made clear by the land-grant inscriptions that mention agriculture and the building of wells and stepwells.[19]

From north India, there were several routes into Gujarat of varying commercial and strategic significance. In 1025, Maḥmūd took a difficult desert route via Multan, Jaisalmer and Barmer, entering North Gujarat through the Palanpur Gap between the Aravalli outcrop of Mount Abu and the Rann of Kacch.[20] He carried provisions of water and food on thirty thousand camels. The route through the Palanpur Gap towards the north-east was the most popular one for traders and pilgrims. Going north, an Anhilvada trader would pass through Siddhapur, Chandravati, Nadol, Jalor and Palli towards Ajmer in Rajasthan and thence towards Delhi, Mathura and Kanauj. Vīradhavala Vāghelā returned to Dholka from Delhi in 1234 via Abu, Chandravati, Siddhapur, Anhilvada and Karnavati.[21] A little to the east was the route into Rajasthan from Idar and Ahada (modern Udaipur). In 1197, Aybeg defeated Bhīma II who was encamped near Abu to defend the route into Gujarat. Moving onwards, he sacked the city of Anhilvada and then returned to Delhi by way of Ajmer.

From Ajmer or Naraina, one route went towards Delhi while another went west towards Multan and Sind and thence to the north towards Ghazna. According to Istakhrī (951), the distance between Anhilvada and Mansura in Sind was eight days while it took four days to get

[18] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, Cambridge studies in Islamic civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.10, Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, pp.131-2.
[19] Chattopadhyaya, *Making*, Chapter 2.
[20] H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, eds., *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, 7 vols., vol. II (1969; reprint, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad), p.469, Abu al-Qâsim Firishta, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India till the year AD 1612: Translated from the original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta (1570-1614)*, trans. John Briggs, vol. I (London: 1829; reprint, 1990), p.69, M. Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna* (Cambridge: 1931; reprint, New Delhi, 1971), p.215.
[21] C.D. Dalal, ed., *Hammiramadamardana of Jayasimha Suri*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. X (Baroda: 1920), Act V.

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from Cambay to Anhilvada.[22] This route passed through Palli and Kiradu, both of which were within the Caulukya dominions. An alternative route to Sind was through eastern Kacch, skirting the Rann towards Nagar Parkar and thence to Mansura.

Another route linking Gujarat with north India was through Malwa into south Gujarat via Godhra and Dohad in the Panchamahal hills. It linked western India with Dhar and Ujjain, from where the road split towards north and south India. This was the main route towards the Ganga basin too. Merutunga tells us that the Caulukya king Durlabharāja (c.1009-1024) took this route to Varanasi on pilgrimage, passing through Malwa.[23] This was also the route taken by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in the fourteenth century from Delhi to Cambay. The Caulukya kings and their successors took considerable pains to keep the route secure for traders and pilgrims.

The increase in traffic through the northern route from the tenth century saw new towns springing up along the trade routes and minor villages growing into important staging posts or towns. The first of these was Anhilvada, established by Mūlarāja in the tenth century, which soon became a prosperous trading town. Siddhapur, also built in the tenth century, came into prominence in the twelfth under Siddharāja who completed the royal Śaiva temple complex of Rudramahālaya there and invited families of north Indian brahmanas to settle in its vicinity. In southern Rajasthan, towns like Nadlai, Nadol, Bali and Jalor came into prominence and inscriptions show that they housed merchants, customs-posts and warehouses. Kiradu near modern Barmer became an important town in the twelfth century under Caulukya control and inscriptions show a large colony of merchants settled there. Bhinmal or Śrīmāla, which lay on the land route to Sind from western India was an important town. In spite of large-scale migrations of merchants and brahmanas into Gujarat from the tenth century, it maintained its prosperity. An inscription of 1219 mentions that Karmasiṃha, 'in charge of the export and import departments' of Bhinmal gave gifts for the worship of Mahāvīradeva.[24]

Along the eastern route, the important towns were Dabhoi, Kapadvanj, Godhra and Dohad. All these lay on the route between the Malwa hinterland and Cambay and the other Gujarat ports and are mentioned as the 'chief towns' in the Girnar inscription of 1231.[25] Dabhoi or Darbhāvati was developed as a frontier fortress by Siddharāja in the twelfth century. The road

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[22] Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, pp. 506 ff.
[23] Merutungacarya, *Prabandhacintamani*, Bibliotheca Indica (1901), p.30.
[24] V.K. Jain, *Trade and Traders in Western India, 1000-1300* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1990), p.120.
[25] James Burgess, *Report on the Antiquities of Kutch and Kathiawar. Being the result of the second season's operations of the Archaeological Survey of Western India 1874-75* (London: India Museum, 1876; reprint, Sindhi Adabi Board, Jam Shoro, Sind, Pakistan, 1991.), pp.170, 218.

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to the south towards Konkan was difficult on account of river-crossings and hilly terrain and traders tended to take the easterly route through Malwa instead. Alternatively they could sail down the coast to the Konkan ports.

While these towns became prosperous and were important centres of trade and manufacture, in the eyes of travellers they did not compare well with the great ports such as Cambay or Somanath. Asaval and Dholka were towns 'populous, commercial, rich, industrious and productive of useful articles.'[26] Anhilvada, the Caulukya capital, was even less impressive. In 1100, it was reported as a staging point: 'a town of moderate importance on the route from Sindh to India, a place of little trade, producing small quantities of fruit but numerous flocks'.[27]

In spite of its apparent insularity, cut off as it was by mountains to the east and south, eastern Gujarat became a vitally important region for trade and manufacture. As new towns came up along the trade routes, epigraphic references to tanks, ponds and wells show that there was corresponding expansion of agriculture too, although that remained subsidiary to trade. By the thirteenth century, trade flourished all over eastern Gujarat, although there were still parts of the central forested region between Anhilvada and Cambay that were uncultivated, heavily wooded and inhabited by Bhīls. It was not until the fifteenth century that these territories would be finally cleared and brought under the plough.

2. Saurashtra and the coast

The Saurashtra coastline, by and large, lacks the marshy tidal flats of the Kacch coast and has narrow beaches and low cliffs, with only a few indentations.[28] In spite of its long extent, its only good natural harbour is Bet, at the north-east corner of Okhamandal. The Gulf of Cambay coast on the other hand is deeply indented, providing sites for the many estuarine ports of Gujarat where commerce was carried out, including Mangrol, Veraval, Diu, Gogha and Cambay. The mouths of the rivers Sabarmati, Mahi, Narmada and Tapi, which open into the Gulf of Cambay, are dotted with small islands called '*bets*'. These include the island of Piram which was the stronghold of the piratical Gohil chieftains in the fourteenth century.

The distinction between the coast and the hinterland seems to have been particularly marked in medieval Gujarat and each had a distinct historical trajectory. While mainland Gujarat was regularly invaded from the north, the sea route to the Gujarati ports led to the development of

[26] Elliot and Dowson, *History I*, p.87.
[27] Ibid., p.84.
[28] Saurashtra was called Sorath in medieval times and was later called Kathiavad by the Marathas (from the horse-breeding Kāṭhīs who entered the peninsula from Kacch).

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a vast regional trading complex which was largely independent of hinterland political activity. The coast appeared to occupy a different political status – it was never more than nominally subject to a hinterland power, whether administered from Anhilvada, Delhi or Ahmadabad. From the tenth century, the coastal ports were self-administered for the most part, with the merchant colonies having their own representatives and a supervising official as overseer.

Saurashtra projects into the Arabian Sea to the south of Kacch. The salt-encrusted Rann stretches along its northern border while the east of the peninsula is marked by a long fault line that once cut it off from the mainland of Gujarat. It would seem from the testimony of al-Masʿūdī and others that a tributary of the Indus used to discharge itself into the Gulf of Cambay passing through the Rann, bisecting Saurashtra from mainland Gujarat and joining the Sabarmati as it drained into the Gulf.[29] Later travellers also spoke of Saurashtra as an island for part of the year and a branch of the Indus emptying into the Gulf of Cambay. Varthema who visited Gujarat in 1503-08 mentioned that the city of Cambay lay three miles inland, close to the mouth of the Indus.[30] James Macmurdo stated in 1813 that a tract similar to the Rann connected the Gulf of Kacch and Cambay, cutting off Saurashtra during the rains.[31] It was the earthquake of 1819 that cut off the old Indus distributaries into the Rann and the consequent silting up of the eastern branch of the Indus and other rivers helped join north-eastern Saurashtra to the Gujarat mainland. All that is left of this channel of water is the marshy Nal lake south-east of the Little Rann, which forms a boundary between Gujarat and the peninsula of Saurashtra. Even now, during the monsoon, the Little Rann gets waterlogged and water drains into the Gulf of Cambay through the Nal lake.[32]

In the rainy season, it was easiest to enter Saurashtra from the low plateau in the north near Dhrangadhra and Vadhvan, both of which had considerable strategic importance for this reason.[33] Before the eleventh century, the main route from Gujarat to the peninsula was by the coastal route from Cambay to Bhavnagar, along the coast to Somanath and thence to the north-western corner of the peninsula at Dvaraka. This is the route that most pilgrims and traders took as the central part of the peninsula was hazardous and uncharted and inhabited by 'wild' tribes. During Maḥmūd's campaign in 1025, he seems to have taken the coastal route from Anhilvada to

[29] Elliot and Dowson, *History I*, p.23.
[30] R.E. Enthoven and S.M. Edwardes, eds., *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial series, Bombay Presidency*, vol. I and II (1909), p.105.
[31] James Macmurdo, "Dissertation on the River Indus," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* I (1834): p.41.
[32] O.H.K. Spate and A.T.A. Learmonth, *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography* (London: Methuen, 1967), p.646.
[33] Ibid., p.645.

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Somanath, returning along the arid northerly route through Kacch and Sind.[34] It was in the twelfth century that Siddharāja built a new road cutting through the peninsula on his campaign against the Cuḍāsamā chieftain of Junagadh. This passed through Munjapura, Jhinjhuvad, Viramgam, Vadhvan, Sayla, Gondal, Jetpur, Vanthali on to the coast at Somanath.[35] New settlements and wells were constructed along this road which soon became the regular route from north Gujarat to the Saurashtra ports.

The peninsula of Saurashtra is radially drained towards the coast by rivers arising from a central plateau which rises from all sides into hills and ridges and to the south of which is the Girnar range. Sikandar describes the Girnar region while narrating Maḥmūd Begaḍā's expedition to the region:

> Be it known that there is a mountain surrounding Girnar on all sides but the northern. On the south there is a pass between two mountains, twelve *kos* in extent, and in this valley there is a jungle so dense that a horse cannot pass through it; it has numerous caves and it is uninhabitable, except for birds and beasts and a tribe of infidels, called Khants, who bear a greater resemblance to wild beasts than men.[36]

Saurashtra and Kacch possess an arid climate, a fact that is attested by early observers. There is little rainfall, especially in Kacch (average 305-381 mm) and the main vegetation is dry thorn forest.[37] This has led to the dominance of a pastoralist and semi-pastoralist economy over most of the region. The northern coast of the peninsula around Dvaraka and Halar shade into the Kacch region where agriculture is scarce and livestock pastoralism is the norm. Water is a scarce commodity in the entire region and settlers made considerable efforts to conserve water in agricultural areas by building wells, tanks and bunds. This process was a slow one and the expansion of agriculture and settlement over the region may be traced through inscriptions and remains of water-bodies.

The two most fertile regions are the elevated area around the Girnar mountain where rainfall tends to be higher and the well-drained eastern region of Gohilvad along the Nal depression.[38] Accordingly, some of the earliest settlements in the peninsula were in these regions. There is an Aśokan inscription at Girnar and, during the Gupta period, a tank was built by the

[34] Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p.215.
[35] Jain, *Trade*, p.110.
[36] Manjhu Gujarati Sikandar b. Muhammad, *Mirati Sikandari*, trans. Fazlullah Lutfullah Faridi (Dharampur: Education Society's Press, n.d.; reprint, Vintage Books, 1990.), p.53, Manjhu Gujarâtî Sikandar b. Muhammad, *The Mirat-i-Sikandari: A History of Gujarat from the Inception of the Dynasty of the Sultans of Gujarat to the Conquest of Gujarat by Akbar of Shaikh Sikandar ibn Muhammad urf Manjhu ibn Akbar*, Department of History Series No. 3 (Baroda: M.S. University, 1961), p.114.
[37] Spate and Learmonth, *Geography*, p.646.
[38] Ibid., pp.646-7.

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local governor who also commissioned a long inscription. The next significant settlement was that of the Maitrakas in the Valabhi region, now in Gohilvad. Hsuan Tsang visited the region in the seventh century and remarked on the monasteries established for the benefit of Buddhist recluses. The inhabitants of the land were indifferent, he said, and not given to learning, but profited by the proximity of the sea and engaged much in trade and barter.[39] It is generally believed that the rule of the Maitrakas ended after a sea-borne Arab raid in the late eighth century.

According to one account, the chief inhabitants of the peninsula at the end of the seventh century were the Jeṭhvās, Cāvaḍās, Vāḷās, Āhīrs, Rabārīs, Mers, Bhīls and Kolīs.[40] On the evidence of their legends and motifs, it has been suggested that the first three groups were converts from Buddhism.[41] The Jeṭhvās, who trace their origin to a mythical crocodile, were sun-worshipping pastoralists who made their way to Gujarat from the north-west and controlled the region of modern Porbandar by the seventh century. The Cāvaḍās settled successively in Dhank, Okha and then Prabhas Patan. Often stigmatized as plunderers and pirates, they controlled Somanath Patan at the time of the invasion of Maḥmūd in 1025.[42] Although they were the custodians of the Śaivite Somanath temple, they may have been sun-worshippers.[43] The third clan that was significant in this early period was that of the Vāḷās, who claimed descent from the Maitrakas of Valabhi.

The next three clans are pastoralist groups who it would seem were already resident in the peninsula. It is possible that these groups suffered military defeats against the dominant clans, as a result of which they accepted subsidiary positions. This can be seen in the relationship of the Mers with the Jeṭhvās wherein the installation of a new Jeṭhvā ruler can only be completed by a blood-mark on his forehead from the finger of the Mer leader.[44] It may be that the Mers, having been defeated at some point, became the allies and symbolic granters of the throne to the Jeṭhvās. A similar relationship is seen between the Āhīrs with the Cuḍāsamās of Junagadh.[45]

At this time, the northern part of the peninsula was largely uninhabited. The Jeṭhvās and Mers ruled along the western coast, the Cāvaḍās along the south-western coast and the Vāḷās

[39] Enthoven and Edwardes, eds., *Imperial Gazetteer*, p.351.
[40] H. Wilberforce-Bell, *History of Kathiawad from the Earliest Times* (1916), p.48.
[41] Ibid., p.49.
[42] Ibid., pp.51-2.
[43] Romila Thapar, "Somanatha: Narratives of a History," *Seminar* 475 (1999): p.45.
[44] There was a similar relationship between Bhils and the Guhilas. See B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Origin of the Rajputs: The Political, Economic and Social Processes in Early Medieval Rajasthan," in *The Making of Early Medieval India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.62.
[45] Harald Tambs-Lyche, *Power, Profit and Poetry: Traditional Society in Kathiawar, Western India*, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997), pp.32-33.

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controlled a territory from Vanthali in the centre of the peninsula to the south-eastern coast bordering the Gulf of Cambay. Around 875, the Vāḷās were displaced from Vanthali by the Cuḍāsamās, migrants from Sind who went on to control the surrounding territories until well into the fifteenth century.

During the Caulukya reign in mainland Gujarat, the peninsula was divided between various clans including the Jeṭhvās to the west of Saurashtra (in the vicinity of modern Porbandar) and the Jhālās in northern Kathiavad. The Gohils entered the peninsula from Marwar in the thirteenth century while the Jāḍejās and Kāṭhīs came from Kacch.[46] The prominent threat to the Caulukyas of eastern Gujarat were, however, the Cuḍāsamā rulers with their stronghold at Vanthali, near Junagadh.

While the pastoralist clans lived in the countryside, the towns were inhabited by merchants, religious establishments and occupational groups. Chieftains such as the Cuḍāsamās or the Vājās did not exercise direct control over towns such as Somanath although they clearly had interests in the trade and pilgrim traffic to and from the towns. It is rare, however, to find inscriptions of the pastoralist clans within the towns.

The fabled wealth of the temple of Somanath in southern Saurashtra became an attraction for a succession of iconoclastic plunderers beginning with Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 1026. Its wealth did not only attract Muslim invaders; even Mokhḍājī, the Gohil chieftain of the late fourteenth century is believed to have plundered it.[47] Somanath was also a prominent port where Arab sailors regularly docked to trade and even build mosques, one of which was built by a Muslim ship-owner from Hormuz on land bought from the temple property.[48] Earlier, in the tenth century, the Caulukya ruler Mūlarāja of Gujarat had a long tussle with the Cuḍāsamā ruler of Vanthali near Junagadh who was accused of harassing pilgrims on their way to Somanath, the route for which lay in his territories. Although Mūlarāja defeated the chieftain, the Cuḍāsamās went on to become one of the prestige Rajput clans of the area until the fifteenth century. This was the first instance in a long series of conflicts between the rulers of the peninsula and the hinterland of eastern Gujarat.

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[46] Enthoven and Edwardes, eds., *Imperial Gazetteer*, p.352.
[47] M.I. Dar, *Literary and Cultural Activities in the Sultanate of Gujarat* (Bombay: n.d.), p. 30., citing inscriptions found on Mount Girnar, source not mentioned.
[48] D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing upon Indian History and Civilization from 6-18th Century AD*, 2 vols., vol. II (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), pp.402-406..

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3. Kacch and the Rann

Kacch itself is now almost cut off from the Indian subcontinent. The marshlands of the Rann and the Little Rann stretch to the north and east, while the Gulf of Kacch to the south joins the Arabian Sea. The country itself is rocky, treeless scrubland with infrequent intervals of fertile and cultivated plain and pastureland. Possibly in the eleventh or twelfth century, the course of the Indus began to move to its western branch. As a result of this, aided by one of the seismic disturbances common in Kacch, the lagoon dried up and was salinated by seeping sea water to form the Rann.[49] Another great earthquake, in 1819, resulted in the sinking of a large portion of the western part of the Rann, so that a large marshy area became an inland sea, engulfing the ancient fortress of Sindri.[50]

The Rann of Kacch and the contiguous Little Rann are 'an extensive country of naked tidal mud flats transected by dead and live creeks.'[51] They are partly inundated during the monsoon when they are dotted with little islands that surround sparsely populated Kacch, separating it from Sind and the Thar desert to the north and Radhanpur and Kathiavad on the east and south. The Kacch coastline both on the south and the west has a marshy zone dotted with mangrove into which sea water flows at low tide. In ancient times, the Rann is believed to have been an arm of the Arabian Sea, so that Kacch was an island, more accessible from Sind than from Gujarat. The Rann is believed to have been a navigable lake at the time of Alexander's invasion (325 BC) and a shallow lagoon at the date of the Periplus (second century C.E.) and there are local traditions of seaports on its borders.[52] Since then it has been a salty desert populated only by wild animals.

The peninsula of Kacch has an identity and language quite distinct from that of Gujarat and its history also demonstrates that it has at least as much in common with Sind as with Gujarat. Traces of the Indus valley civilization have been found in Kacch and it has been surmised that the civilization penetrated into Saurashtra and western India through Kacch. Kacch was intermittently part of subsequent kingdoms, such as the Indo-Bactrians, the Śakas and the Maitrakas. If the place called K-i-ta or Ki-c'ha mentioned by Hsuan Tsang refers to Kacch, then the region in the seventh century was prosperous with trade and contained, apart from eighty

[49] L.F. Rushbrook Williams, *Black Hills: Kutch in History and Legend* (London: 1958), pp.57-59.
[50] Ibid., p.58.
[51] K.R. Dikshit, *Geography of Gujarat* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1970), p.121.
[52] Enthoven and Edwardes, eds., *Imperial Gazetteer*, p.185.

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Buddhist convents, several Hindu temples.[53] From the eighth century onwards, parts of Kacch were settled and occupied by pastoralist groups such as the Sammās, Kāṭhīs and Cāvaḍās. Arab merchants arrived along the coast to trade and remained a consistent presence through the subsequent centuries at the ports of Kacch. Trade already ranged from East Asia to Africa and the coast of Kacch is notorious in the accounts of Arab travellers for being infested with pirates.

In the following years, there is a legend of the incursion of the Jakhs, a band of 'white-skinned, horse-riding foreigners from Central Asia' or variantly, from Byzantium who delivered the people from a tyrant in Kacch. 'The Jakhs became demi-gods and mounted images of the seventy-two men and one woman are still worshipped in Kutch.'[54] Meanwhile, Maḥmūd of Ghazna invaded Gujarat in 1025, on his way to Somanath and returned towards Multan by the long and difficult land route through the desert, skirting Kacch and becoming lost in the desert.[55]

Branches of a pastoralist clan, the Sammās, began to enter Kacch from the tenth century and later achieved control over the area. The eleventh century also saw the establishment of the rule of the Sūmrā clan in lower Sind and the beginning of a tradition of enmity with the Sammās. In the twelfth century, the Sammās fled from Sind into Kacch and were granted land by the ruling Cāvaḍās. The Sammās, under another Lākho, soon supplanted the Cāvaḍās and came to be known as the Jāḍejās. The branches of the Jāḍejā clans joined forces in the thirteenth century to drive out the Kāṭhīs from Kacch. The conquest of Gujarat by 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī and the appointment of governors at Anhilvada does not seem to have affected Jāḍejā fortunes in Kacch. 'Alā' al-Dīn ended the Sūmrā power in Sind,[56] (or it possibly ended around the time of Muḥammad bin Tughluq's invasion in 1351[57]) which led to migrations of Sūmrās and Sammās into Kacch and also served to cement the links between Sind and Kacch.

The invasion of Sind by Muḥammad bin Tughluq in 1351, in pursuit of the rebel Taghai who was harboured by the last of the Sūmrā Jāms, coincided with the final overthrow of the

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[53] S. Beal, *Chinese Accounts of India: Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang*, trans. S. Beal (Calcutta: Susil Gupta, 1958), p.51.
[54] F. Mallison, "Saints and Sacred Places in Saurashtra and Kutch: The Cases of the Naklaṃki Cult and the Jakhs," in *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions*, ed. P. Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, Asian Religions and Society (Georgetown: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), Williams, *Black Hills*, p.84.
[55] Minhaj al-Din Abu `Umar `Uthman b. Siraj al-Din Juzjani, *Tabakat-i-Nasiri: a general history of the Muhammadan dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan, from A.H. 194 [810 A.D.], to A.H. 658 [1260 A.D.], and the irruption of the infidel Mughals into Islam*, trans. H.G. Raverty, Bibliotheca Indica (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1872-81), p.332.
[56] Williams, *Black Hills*, p.100.
[57] U.M. Daudpota, "Sind and Multan," in *The Delhi Sultanat. AD 1206-1526*, ed. Mohammad Habib and K.A. Nizami, A Comprehensive History of India. Vol. V, Part II (The Indian History Congress, 1970; reprint, 2nd edition 1993, People's Publishing House), p.1123.

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Sūmrās and the invasion made many of the Sindi Sammās migrate to Kacch.[58] The sultan died on his way to Sind and his forces were worsted by the Sammās. His successor, Fīrūz Shāh, marched to Thatta with cavalry and elephants to avenge this defeat. The enterprise did not succeed and Fīrūz Shāh was obliged to retreat to Gujarat, marching through Kacch to chastise the Kacchi branch of the Sammās. On the way, his army was stranded for weeks in the Rann. Shams-i-Sirāj ʿAfīf described the difficulties of Firūz Shāh's army in the *Ta'rīkh-i-Fīrūz Shāhī*:

> Grain rose to one *tanka* and two *tankas* a ser and even at that price was not to be obtained. Men, through craving hunger and helpless nakedness, could not pursue their way, and in their extreme distress gave up in despair. As no corn was to be procured, carrion and raw hides were devoured; some men were driven by extreme hunger to boil old hides and to eat them. A deadly famine reigned and all men saw death staring them in the face. All the horses were destroyed and the *khans* and *maliks* were compelled to pursue their weary way on foot....The guides who led the way and conducted them had maliciously misled them into a place called Kunchi-ran (the Rann of Kacch). In this place all the land is impregnated with salt to a degree impossible to describe and if the water was held upon the tongue it crystallised.
>
> When the army was thus reduced to the extremity of despair, the Sultan had one of the false guides beheaded. Then the others came honestly before him and said: 'We have dealt falsely toward you and have led you into a place where none but you could have survived; not even things which could fly in the air and drive along like the wind. This place is called Kunchi-ran and the sea is near. The saltness of the water arises from this proximity, and the district is deadly.'...The water, indeed, was so excessively salt that all men were in amazement and despair. As far as the eye could reach, all was salt water.... When with great difficulty and exertion they escaped from that salt country they came into a desert where no bird laid an egg or flapped its wing, where no tree was to be seen, and where no blade of grass grew. If even a lethal weed had been wanted it could not have been found. No other desert, however fearful, could be compared with this.[59]

Fīrūz Shāh returned to Sind by a safer route in 1363, but the Sammā Jām of Thatta was soon afterwards confirmed in his position on condition of paying tribute to Delhi and remained in control until the sixteenth century.

With the crumbling of imperial control from Delhi, Ẓafar Khān's line were established as rulers of Gujarat. In his last campaign in 1410, Muẓaffar Shāh compelled the Jāḍejā of the fort of Kanthkot to submit and pay tribute, thereby reopening the old connection between Kacch and

[58] Ibid., p.1122. For the pursuit of Taghai see Simon Digby, "Muhammad bin Tughluq's Last Years in Kathiavad and his Invasions of Thattha," *Hamdard Islamicus* 2, no. 1 (1979).
[59] Elliot and Dowson, *History III*, pp.324-5.

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Anhilvada.[60] The rest of Kacch does not seem to have come under the control of the new capital Ahmadabad and it was only in the reign of Maḥmūd Begaḍā that Kacch was conquered.

The Kacchi Sammās had adopted at some stage an unorthodox version of Islam, possibly a variant of the Ismāʿīlī belief derived from their age-old links with Sind. Parts of Sind and Multan had been ruled, since before the invasion of Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 1025, by Ismāʿīlīs who, it has been suggested, were the Sūmrās.[61] While the Sammā Jāms of Sind seem to have espoused Sunni beliefs, it is possible that the Kacchi branch of the clan owed allegiance to Ismāʿīlī beliefs. They also had links with the Kānphaṭā or slit-eared order of ascetics.[62] After Maḥmūd Begaḍā, an enthusiastic Sunni, secured the submission of the greater part of Saurashtra, including the citadel of Junagadh, the independence and heterodoxy of the tribes of Kacch and repeated complaints about piracy off the coast of Kacch and Bet-Dvaraka spurred him to action. In 1472, Maḥmūd arrived in Kacch, confirmed the Jāḍejās in their possessions and dissuaded them from their 'heterodox' belief. The Jāḍejā rulers were, from Maḥmūd Begaḍā's reign, subservient to the Ahmadabad sultans; they paid no tribute but were liable for military service.

The region of Kacch saw many of the features of the historical trajectory of pastoralism. Oral and recorded traditions, inscriptions and some Persian chronicles of the mainland demonstrate the advent of pastoralist groups as they entered the region as herders, traders or seafarers. Some of these groups took to sedentary lives and acquired in time the social and political systems of settled agrarian communities. Others stayed on the move, retaining their occupational flexibility and fluidity of religious beliefs.

Frontiers and territories

The idea of a moving frontier has been used very effectively by Richard Eaton in describing the rise of Islam in Bengal together with the extension of rice cultivation and corresponding peasantisation. In Gujarat, however, the situation is more complex. Firstly, while in Bengal, the agrarian frontier moved eastwards, in Gujarat there were physical incursions of groups from the north, the north-west and the east and at certain periods, also from the south. In addition, Gujarat's long coastline meant that there was constant contact with and settlement of merchants and sailors from the Persian Gulf and south India. Thus, there was constant settlement from all directions.

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[60] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.10.
[61] Daudpota, "Sind and Multan.", Mohammad Habib and Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, eds., *The Delhi Sultanat (AD 1206-1526)*, 2nd ed., vol. V, Part II, A Comprehensive History of India (New Delhi: Indian History Congress. People's Publishing House, 1993; reprint, 1982), p.1119.
[62] Williams, *Black Hills*, pp.94-7.

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Movement and settlement into Gujarat took many forms. Firstly, there were physical incursions of people from various directions, most notably from the north and from across the sea. The settlers were incorporated into local political systems or set up their own authority. Gujarat was at the intersection of a number of zones. In the eyes of Arab visitors, it was not always clear if it was part of Al-Hind or Al-Sind, a continuation of hinterland kingships or of pastoralist military regimes. Al-Idrīsī (c.1100), for example, referred to Anhilvada as one of the towns of the second climate 'on the confines of a desert between Sindh and Hind, the home of the sheep-grazing and horse- and camel-breeding Meds.' [63]

From the first century C.E., waves of immigrants settled in Gujarat, bringing their cults and deities. By the sixth century, a number of significant urban settlements may be discerned from archaeological and textual evidence, the most important being Valabhi on the southern coast of Saurashtra. By the eighth century, the emphasis had shifted to north Gujarat, where important urban settlements were coming up, prominent among which was Anhilvada Patan. The town and the region around it became the hub of trade, the site for the production of goods for trade, the locus of successive royal cults and an important stop on the trade and military route from north India to the coast. Meanwhile, the coastal towns housed large settlements of Arab and Persian merchants and settlers.

While all this urban settlement was taking place, there must have been clearance and settlement of new areas for agriculture. However, there is less evidence of large-scale clearance and agriculture than in north India. Agricultural activity seems to have been in the vicinity of the towns and much of what was produced was intended to form a part of the long-distance trade.

In order to map settlement, trade and the development of political authority in this period, it may be useful to trace the overlapping spheres of the merchants and the pastoralists. The most important feature of the politics of Gujarat from the first century onwards was the incursion of pastoralist groups, often highly militarised. Waves of such incursions continued until the fourteenth century and on a smaller scale, even later. These pastoralists came from Sind, Rajasthan, Punjab and often, as in the case of the Śakas and Hūṇas, originated much further away. Many of these pastoralists sedentarised and took control of territories in Saurashtra, Kacch and Gujarat. It would seem, from the fact that they were often castigated as robbers or pirates, that their livelihood depended upon exploiting the trade and pilgrim traffic through their territories. There is little evidence that these groups practised large-scale agriculture. Other such groups retained an itinerant lifestyle, periodically migrating across north India with cattle and goods.

[63] Elliot and Dowson, *History I*, p.77.

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1. Merchants

Certain individuals from such groups would seem to have set themselves up as merchants, such as the Anhilvada merchant in Ghazna in the eleventh century, Wāsa Abhīra.[64] Such merchants, along with other inhabitants of the urbanised belt of north Gujarat, began to become important players in the widening web of trade networks. As the trade of Gujarat linked up with wide-ranging networks over land and sea, intricately regulated sets of trading arrangements were evolved which had remarkable longevity and often functioned independently of political changes. The expansion of trade also meant that political authority was obliged to take into account the needs of traders and at times make political accommodations with them. For example, the twelfth century Jaina merchant Jagaḍū of Bhadreshvar in Kacch was able to set himself up as a merchant prince with the authority of the Caulukya ruler because of his local power and his interests in the militarily vital horse trade from the Persian Gulf.[65]

Merchants or their agents had to be very mobile and carrier communities acquired great importance. Nomadic communities marched with their cattle and laden carts across north India to the ports of the coast. Nomads and merchants also met at periodic markets and fairs where livestock were brought for sale, commodities sold and bought, information exchanged and, often, religious duties fulfilled. Rural produce – foodgrains, raw cotton and metal – was collected at village fairs or small periodic markets to be taken to the towns for resale or processing and urban or imported goods such as textiles, wine and sweets were brought to the village fairs for sale.[66] Access to information was vital to the frontier ethos. Merchants needed privileged information in order to be able to plan trade strategies and mobility became the key to information. All those who sought power or wealth had to be constantly mobile or had to patronise mobile groups such as the nomads, the wandering ascetics, the bards and other privileged repositories of coded or magical information.

From the tenth century, periodic markets were often held near temples or pilgrimage sites. In fact, few fairs were devoid of ritual significance. It is not unlikely that the temples themselves functioned as redistributive agencies on these occasions. Later, fairs were also associated with local cult shrines, sacred rivers or ponds and Muslim grave shrines. While references may be found to fairs pertaining to the larger, more Sanskritised shrines, accounts of the pastoralist and lower caste fairs, which must have been the more numerous, are hard to come

[64] 'Awfī in Elliot and Dowson, eds., *History II*, pp.200-201.
[65] Georg Bühler, ed., *The Jagaducharita of Sarvananda, a historical romance from Gujarat*, Indian Studies No.1 (Wien: Sitzungberichte der Kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, 1892). (see Chapter 3 for more discussion of this text)
[66] Jain, *Trade*, p.139.

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by and must be reconstructed from later, even modern accounts. Fairs were often held for the exchange of livestock, but many other goods changed hands on these occasions. With some of the fairs attracting large numbers, elaborate arrangements were made by local authorities – a tenth century text describes a fair covering an area of two miles, furnished with tents, stalls for cattle, eating houses, water supply, warehouses and a toll-house, 'which was free from the presence of jesters, gamblers etc.'[67] Evidently jesters and gamblers frequented fairs, as did ballad singing bards, mendicants, soothsayers, healers and preachers. Fairs often attracted people from a specific mix of castes. Modern census accounts show that lower castes and 'tribals' are often the chief participants.[68] Fairs and large markets were looked upon as potentially disruptive and leading to the intermingling of castes. The fair organised by the priest Śrībhūti was closely guarded by soldiers and had an assembly to settle commercial disputes.[69] In the *Kīrtikaumudī* of the eleventh century, the merchant-minister Vastupāla is credited with controlling *varṇaśankara* or the intermingling of castes in the markets of Cambay.[70]

2. Pastoralists

Gujarat and Saurashtra were home to a variety of pastoralist chieftains. By the twelfth century, most of Gujarat was apportioned between chieftains, some related to older clans in Rajasthan, others who had migrated from Sind and the North-west and yet others like Bhīls and Kolīs who already lived in the hills and forests. This was a period in which the process of caste and religious group formation intersected with 'state' formation in the whole of north India, especially Sind, Rajasthan, Gujarat and central India. Several communities who later came to be known generically as Rajputs were at this time in the process of making alliances and networks that would eventually emerge as an overarching Rajput identity from the sixteenth century.

The term '*rājpūt*' or '*rājaputra*' was not in common use in Gujarat in this period. Chieftains and kings are referred to in Sanskrit inscriptions by more general terms such as *rājā, mahārājā, rauta, rāṇaka* and others. In the fifteenth century, a Sanskrit verse play composed by a court-poet of the ruler of Champaner does not refer to the king as a Rajput. In the play, which is an account of the conflict between Sultan Muḥammad II of Ahmadabad and Gangadāsa of Champaner, the sultan in a letter to the Rāja demands that he stop sheltering *garāsiyā/grāsiyā*

[67] Ibid., p.139, citing Somadeva's Yasastilakacampu (959 C.E.).
[68] R.K. Trivedi, *Census of India: 1961*, vol. V, Gujarat, Part VII-B, Fairs and Festivals (1965), p.27. See also Table I.
[69] Jain, *Trade*, p.140.
[70] More accurately, 'the commingling of touchables and untouchables'. Ibid., p.139.

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chiefs.[71] Chieftains in Persian sources are also generally referred to as '*garāsiyas*' or by the specific name of their community or lineage group. It would thus be erroneous to assume homogeneity of status or even of political intent among the various 'indigenous' ruling groups prior to the fifteenth century. They had a considerable diversity in political status, position in the caste hierarchy and ethnic origin.

According to Chattopadhyaya, the inscriptions from Rajasthan from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries demonstrate that the emergence of the Rajputs needs to be seen essentially as 'a political process in which disparate groups seeking political power conformed to such norms as permeated the contemporary political ideology.'[72] He links the rise of the Rajputs in this period to a pan-Indian phenomenon – the formation of dynasties seeking legitimation by linking themselves to mythical *kṣatriya* lineages. Conversely, he also links their rise to local social phenomena which drew in groups as the Medas and the Hūṇas into its ambit, in which caste hierarchies evolved with a distinctly local social character.[73] The Rajputs then underwent a process by which sub-clans claiming affinity to a major clan proliferated in Rajasthan (as also in Gujarat). Sub-clans were formed not necessarily through the segmentation of the larger clans but often as the result of the absorption of local groups as subsidiary or junior clans.[74]

This absorption was carried out by marriage or political alliance, the former being a process by which groups such as the Hūṇas, who had acquired substantial political power, could also acquire social legitimacy. By the end of the thirteenth century, the term *rājaputra* which had hitherto been used to denote the 'son of a king', gradually changed in connotation and 'came to denote descent groups and not necessarily a particularly exalted political status.'[75] Twelfth-century texts such as the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* also seem to suggest that descent was the most important factor in the identification of the *rājaputra*.[76] Rajput status, therefore, became one in which descent, real or invented, was the single most important factor to legitimise political authority and a variety of groups came to adhere to this requirement in order to find place in the political hierarchy. The oldest layer of Rajputhood was thus 'an open status group of warrior-ascetics in search of patronage and marriage.'[77] The idea of descent was also related to the invention of royal cults and the construction of royal temples by many of these chieftains. The

[71] The Sanskritised term used is '*grāsino-rājānah*'. B.J. Sandesara, ed., *Gangadāsa-pratāpa-vilāsa-nāṭakam*, Gaekwad Oriental Series, No. 156 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, M.S. University, 1973), p. 40.
[72] Chattopadhyaya, *Making*, p.88.
[73] Ibid., p. 87.
[74] Ibid., pp.87-88.
[75] Ibid., pp. 79-80.
[76] Ibid., p. 80.
[77] Kolff, *Naukar*, p.84.

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Turkic Muslims, who arrived at the end of the fourteenth century, were the first ruling group which did not immediately aspire for 'Rajputization'; they challenged the 'contemporary political ideology' that had made a range of pastoralist groups such as the Medas, Hūṇas and Bhīls and Kolīs in Gujarat, who had pretensions to political power but were marginal to the brahmanical order, conform to descent hierarchies.[78] The Turks had no need for legitimation from the local chieftains. Situated as they were in towns and forts, they were confident of support from powerful traders and, most importantly, of being able to mobilise military resources to back up their governance.

Settlement and trade on the coast

The reason for the great success of the ports of the Gulf of Cambay has never been entirely clear. The Gulf has a long and broken coastline, there are shoals, siltation, high tides and many hazards for the sailor. Navigation there was notoriously difficult and treacherous due to sandbanks and quirks of the tide, to the extent that coastal merchants and rulers often had to send out pilot ships to guide vessels to safety. The difficulties posed by the heavy deposits of silt brought down by the rivers were always manifest. In spite of these drawbacks, the Gujarat ports have been active for millennia.

An account from the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (c. 50 C.E.) gives a sense of the hazards a sailor could expect while entering Barygaza, the ancient port of Bhrigukaccha, near modern Bharuch.

> This gulf is very narrow to Barygaza and very hard to navigate for those coming from the ocean .... And even if the entrance to the gulf is made safely, the mouth of the river at Barygaza is found with difficulty, because the shore is very low and cannot be made out until you are close upon it. And when you have found it the passage is difficult because of the shoals at the mouth of the river.[79]

Additionally, the tides were very strong and the unwary navigator could get into serious trouble. 'For the rush of waters at the incoming tide is irresistible and the anchors cannot hold against it; so that large ships are caught up by the force of it, turned broadside on through the speed of the current and so driven on the shoals and wrecked; and smaller boats are overturned...'[80] It was necessary for visiting ships to be escorted into the harbour by local sailors.

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[78] Chattopadhyaya, *Making*, p. 88. It is interesting that the chronicler of the Gujarat sultans, Sikandar, writing in the seventeenth century, attributed to the sultans a respectable Rajput genealogy and descent from Rāma. Perhaps even the sultans subscribed to the legitimation offered by descent.
[79] *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century*, trans. W.H. Schoff (London, Bombay & Calcutta: 1912), p.22.
[80] Ibid., p.23.

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Bhrigukaccha was abandoned, probably after excessive siltation rendered it completely inaccessible. It was succeeded by ports on the Konkan coast such as Thana and Sopara. By the tenth century, Cambay had become the pre-eminent port of the region. But again, by the mid-fourteenth century, Cambay had become inaccessible to the ocean-going ship. Goods had to be unloaded on to smaller boats which would then make the trip through the shallows to the port.[81] Later, the auxiliary ports of Gandhar or Gogha functioned as the loading points for Cambay. Eventually, of course, a combination of severe natural difficulties and political changes meant that Cambay was supplanted by Surat as the main port of Gujarat.

The long coastline of Gujarat often had a divergent history from the mainland. As the Gujarat ports became the hub of the Indian Ocean trade from the eighth century, patterns of settlement and political organisation were often distinct from those of the mainland, although, as I will argue, hinterland politics were often affected by the necessity of controlling the revenues and resources of the vast trade. Arab traders began to revitalise the India trade within a few years of the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. With the consolidation of city-based Islam by the end of the seventh century, the ports of the Gujarat coastline became a vital point in the fast-developing Asian trade system from Africa and the Mediterranean to south-east Asia and China. It was as early as 636 (H. 15) that a naval expedition was sent by the governor of Bahrayn to attack Thana and in the following year Bharuch.[82] Although neither expedition seems to have met with much success, these early sorties revitalised the route to India that continued to expand invisibly yet momentously for the next millennium.

Commerce between the Arabs and local trading groups made up the trading activities that stretched in a long chain from the Mediterranean to Malacca. Gujarat, with the abundant resources of its productive hinterland, became crucial to this chain and large colonies of merchants of disparate origins – from the Arabian peninsula, Iraq, Central Asia, Abyssinia, Andalusia and even Sicily – settled at its port towns. When al-Mas'ūdī visited Cambay in 916, he found a Muslim population of ten thousand, consisting of settlers from Siraf, Oman, Basra, Baghdad and other places.[83] Many of the coastal cities had mosques where Friday prayers were observed. Al-Istakhrī recorded that at 'Sambil, Sindan, Saymur' and Cambay, there were cathedral mosques for public prayers. At the time of Al-Bīrūnī (1022-64), Cambay was the chief town of the Gujarat kingdom and its markets were supplied with cotton and ginger from the

[81] Ibn Battuta, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta (India, Maldive Islands and Ceylon). Translation and Commentary*, trans. Mahdi Husain, 2nd (reprint) ed., Gaekwad's Oriental Series No.122 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1953; reprint, 1976), p.172.
[82] Dar, *Literary*, p. 15.
[83] Al- Mas'ūdī, quoted in Ibid., p.17.

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surrounding region. Cambay was connected by an overland route to Multan and to Kacch by sea. North Indian products, palm from Kacch and sugar from Malwa, all found their way to Cambay.[84] Al-Bīrūnī also mentioned a great trading centre, Asaval, on the Anhilvada Patan route from Cambay. Idrīsī reported that the chief inland marts were Dholka, Asaval and Sihor (in the Chunval) and Cambay was the great port and naval station.[85] Many of the merchants of Cambay were Arabs and Persians, many of whom had their own mosques and were well treated by the king.

The Gujarati port towns were largely autonomous, with colonies of foreign merchants administered by their own representatives. An official was appointed to administer the affairs of the port in general. Gujarat had a unique position in the trade network, as a site for both the production and redistribution of goods. Here the overland network of trade intersected with and became crucial in the formulation of the oceanic trade. From the tenth century, the Caulukyas stimulated agricultural expansion as well as internal and external trade. Step-wells and water reservoirs were constructed and a 'military road' connecting Anhilvada with the Saurashtra peninsula was constructed.[86] Goods, livestock, and raw material were transported long distances to the markets.

Merchants also travelled farther afield. In *The Travels of Sulaimān*, Abū Zayd (916) of Siraf related that Hindu merchants visited Siraf in large numbers and maintained cordial relations with the Muslim merchants of that region. 'When the Indian merchants of Siraf were invited by one of the principal merchants of the place, the latter out of regard for the susceptibility of the Hindus served them food in separate plates.'[87] Buzurg ibn Shahriyār in the tenth century refers to Hindu merchants (*baniās*) aboard Muslim-owned ships as passengers visiting the ports of the Persian Gulf. 'Awfī (1211) mentions Wāsa Abhīr, a Hindu merchant of Nahrwāla, who had a flourishing trade with Ghazni with the help of his agents. After the defeat of the army of Mu'izz al-Dīn in Gujarat, the latter was advised by one of his councillors to replenish his treasury by confiscating the property of Wāsa Abhīr. 'But this Mu'izz al-Dīn refused to do, stating that had Nahrwāla fallen into his hands the appropriation of Wāsa Abhīr's property would have been lawful, but to seize his property at Ghazni would be contrary to justice.'[88]

Cotton was the leading agricultural produce in Gujarat, along with indigo, oilseeds,

[84] Sachau, *Alberuni's India: an account of the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, pp. 208-209.
[85] Elliot and Dowson, *History I*, p.87.
[86] Jain, *Trade*, p.110.
[87] Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi, *Arab-o-Hind ke Ta`alluqat* (Allahabad: Hindustani Akaydami, 1929), p.49.
[88] Elliot and Dowson, eds., *History II*, p.200, Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, p.267.

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sugarcane and hemp. From the tenth century we see a shift in the Arab trade from Gujarat from merely luxury trade to bulk goods, which supported the expansion of local production, including cotton and leather goods, timber, sugar, dyes, spices and semi-precious stones.[89] Silk cloth and velvet were also produced, using raw silk from China and Bengal. Drugs and medicinal products, such as opium, spikenard, arrowroot, lac, borax and Indian wormwood, were also fabricated as were handicrafts such as iron weapons, furniture and jewellery.[90] Large and increasing quantities of cotton, refined indigo and hemp were required for the growing textile industry that supplied utilitarian and luxury fabrics for the domestic and overseas markets. Although figures for production are not available, textual evidence indicates a wide use of Indian textiles for purposes of dress, furnishing and ritual.[91] Gujarati block-printed cotton from the eleventh century onwards has been recovered from Cairo, sites on the Red Sea and up the Nile in Nubia and seems to have been used for utilitarian clothing, bedding and furnishing.[92] Similar block-printed material dated to the fifteenth century was put to ritual use in Indonesia. Textual evidence also indicates that better-quality woven and embroidered fabrics, of silk, cotton and leather were also exported from Gujarat, but excavated or preserved fragments cannot be conclusively proved to be Gujarati in origin.[93]

Trade from the Gujarat ports, however, did not include only items produced locally. The transit trade dealt in commodities from as far afield as China and Europe. Imports into India, handled again by both Arab and local merchants, were more limited and depended to a greater degree on demand. Commodities that were imported included furs, wine and dates.[94] Barbosa, writing before 1518, refers to the sea-borne transport of Sinhalese elephants to Gujarat. Elephants from Ceylon and even Burma were shipped to Cambay and other ports for the use of the sultans of Gujarat and Delhi, among others.[95] Of the imported goods, few were intended to be sold locally. In the Geniza letters, the commodities sent to India from the Red Sea were intended for the use of the Jewish merchant families settled there, or like damaged bronze utensils, were sent

[89] Jain, *Trade*, pp. 12-20, 105-6.
[90] M.N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers of Gujarat: the Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976), p.13.
[91] Ruth Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt -- The Newberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford*, vol. I Text, vol. II Plates (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), vol.I, p.80. Gujarati block-printed textiles were used in ceremonies and as funeral shrouds in Indonesia from the fifteenth century.
[92] Ibid., p. 31.
[93] Ibid., p. 32.
[94] M. Zaki, *Arab Accounts of India (during the fourteenth century)* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1987), p.27.
[95] Simon Digby, *War-horse and elephant in the Dehli Sultanate: a study of military supplies* (Oxford: Orient Monographs, 1971), pp. 71-73.

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to be re-made by artisans in South India.[96] Most imports were re-traded at the Gujarat ports.

A very important item of trade was horses, required by most Indian rulers since locally-bred horses were not of the quality required for war animals. The only areas where Indian horses were found were Kacch, Kathiavad, Rajasthan and along the Indus to the Himalayas – linked to the Central Asian breeding grounds. Relatively cheaper cross-bred horses from this area and Afghanistan were imported overland – the Turki or Tātāri horses.[97] Horses were also exported from the Gujarat ports. When Muḥammad b. Tughluq wanted to send a hundred horses to China, they were dispatched from Gandhar.[98] In Caulukya Gujarat, imported horses were virtually the monopoly of royalty. The claim of the merchant Jagaḍū of Bhadreshvar to a horse ordered for the king was tantamount to a challenge of authority.[99] In the fifteenth century, most rulers required horses 'for show and for wars' as a priority of military survival.[100] Horses also had symbolic significance, standing in for royalty, heroism and the warrior ethos.

Merchant ships, as well as ships owned by the sultans of Gujarat and Delhi which sailed between the ports of Gujarat and the Persian Gulf were engaged in the import of horses.[101] Large numbers of costly Arab horses were imported annually. Many died on the voyage, the cost for which would be borne by the client kings. Marco Polo reported that the Gulf merchants refused to let horse-doctors travel to India, so that large numbers of the animals died each year and the demand for them was kept up. Consequently, 10,000 horses were imported every year at Ma'bar, Kanbāyat (Cambay) and other western Indian ports.[102] The horse trade also attracted small 'pedlars' like the Russian Afanasio Nikitin who embarked at Hormuz with his horses in a small *tava* boat bound for India. With the rise of the Red Sea-Malabar link, the Konkan ports were deprived of Arab horses, which led the ruler of Thana to resort to piracy to procure them.

The Red Sea ports consistently gained in importance from the tenth century. The Malabar and Coromandel trade was initially more important but the Gujarat and Konkan ports soon regained a share.[103] By the thirteenth century, the Arab trade was increasingly diverted towards

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[96] S.D. Goitein, "The India Trade in Medieval Times," in *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: 1968), p.56.
[97] Andre Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. 2. The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquest, 11th-13th Centuries (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp.83-84.
[98] Battuta, *Rehla*, pp.58-59.
[99] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.22.
[100] Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers*, p. 13.
[101] Digby, *War Horse*, p. 25.
[102] Ibid., p. 31. Wassāf says that during time of Atabeg Abū Bakr, 10,000 horses were exported to western Indian ports including Cambay. 2.2 million dinars were paid for them out of the Hindu temple revenues and taxes on courtesans attached to temples.
[103] Wink, *Al-Hind II*, p.22.

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the ports of south-west India and Calicut grew to be the greatest spice emporium while Cambay saw an imperceptible decline. The growing European demand for goods from the east made the Red Sea ports the transit centre, importing from the east and selling to the west. The rise of the Red Sea ports and the increasing demand for spices resulted in a reorganisation of the Gujarati ports. Smaller ports began to share in the trade and Cambay was no longer the largest or most important of them. At the same time, smaller ports such as Veraval, Diu and Mangrol were developing along the Gujarat coastline, in almost every creek or inlet. Ports also began to specialise in specific commodities and ships from Aden and Fustat came bound for specific destinations. Ships did not go from port to port on the coast because of the high import duties levied on the goods. As new ports came up, others were abandoned and the tenor of trade changed. Bharuch gave way to Cambay which was supplanted by Diu, Somanath, Mangrol and a host of smaller ports, which in turn gave way to Surat.

A religious geography

Gujarat itself, especially the peninsula of Saurashtra, had long been considered a 'frontier region' from the point of view of brahmanical civilisation. The incursions and assimilation of outsiders from Central Asia, Persia and the North-West from an early historic period gave the region the stigma of impurity in brahmanical texts. In early texts, it was clearly a frontier zone, not quite within the Brahmanical fold. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa (eighth century or later) says: 'He who goes to Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Surashtra or Magadha, unless it be for pilgrimage, deserves to go through a fresh purification.'[104] Peninsular Gujarat was thus grouped with Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as a ritually impure marginal area.

Part of the reason for the stigmatisation of Gujarat as an impure region may have been the popularity of Buddhism, Jainism and other non-brahmanical sects. Like eastern India, Gujarat and Sind had been strongholds of Buddhist (and in the case of Gujarat, Jaina) settlements. In the seventh century, Hsuan Tsang found Buddhist monasteries well established in Saurashtra and Sind although, as in Bengal, their links with the lay populace were beginning to shrink.[105] Buddhism never again became a state-sponsored cult in Gujarat. On the other hand, Jainism had been on the rise since the Valabhi conference in the fifth century when the great schism between the Jaina orders took place. Gujarat became the centre of Śvetāmbara (white-clad) Jainism which found increasing adherents among the merchant groups of Saurashtra and north Gujarat.

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[104] Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.13 fn. 1. The Anusāsanaparvan of the *Mahābhārata* mentions Lāṭas among the Kṣatriya tribes who have become outcastes from seeing no brahmanas. There is also a mention of the robber Saurāṣṭras.

[105] Eaton, *Rise*, p.13, Derryl N. MacLean, *Religion and Society in Arab Sind*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

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After the death of Skandagupta in 470, the Guptas lost control over Gujarat. Saurashtra, Kacch and north and central Gujarat came under Maitraka control. The Maitrakas were ardent worshippers of Śiva as Maheśvara, but the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavata *dharma* continued to some extent in a subsidiary position. However, there is no evidence that Vaiṣṇava temples were built in this period and there are no epigraphic references to temples dedicated solely to Viṣṇu or his incarnations.[106]

In most of north India, the early medieval period was one of the invention of royal cults presided over by brahmanas, such as those of Śiva, Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa and Devī. The Purāṇas became the literary manifestation of this tendency which recorded in mythological terms the expansion, rooting and patronage of the cults of various deities. Gujarat and Saurashtra were an important centre, along with the heretical Buddhism and Jainism, of the Nāga and Yakṣa cults which had also spread over north-west India in the post-Gupta period. Many of these cults were the totemic or family deities of the pastoralist groups coming into Gujarat from the first century C.E.

In addition, Gujarat saw the advent and success of a solar cult, introduced by the Magas from the north-west. Evidence of the introduction of the sun-cult into India comes largely from the *Sāmba Purāṇa* and part of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*. The *Sāmba Purāṇa*, one of the *Purāṇas* mentioned by Al-Bīrūnī, is believed to have been written between C.E. 500-800, probably in north-western India.[107] It records the advent of the *maga-brāhmaṇas* to India from Śakadvīpa, usually identified as Persia or Afghanistan. The sun was believed to have the ability to destroy sins and to cure certain diseases, particularly leprosy.[108] There is also considerable evidence for solar worship in north Gujarat and Saurashtra: several important temples such as those at Modhera and Than, and the fact that the Kāṭhī clan, who also entered Saurashtra from Sind via Kacch, worshipped the sun.[109] Several inscriptions from the eleventh and twelfth centuries also mention sun temples, particularly in the southern part of the Saurashtra peninsula.

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[106] Haripriya Rangarajan, *Spread of Vaishnavism in Gujarat up to 1600 AD (A study with special reference to the iconic forms of Visnu)* (Bombay, New Delhi: Somaiya Publications, 1990), p.6.

[107] Some opinions locate the origin of the Sāmba Purāṇa in Orissa, which was associated with the sun cult, but as Gujarat, Sind and Multan also have evidence of sun worship and as most of the holy places and rivers mentioned in the text refer to northern India, it is more likely that the text originated there. Ludo Rocher, ed., *The Puranas*, A History of Indian Literature, Vol. II, Fasc 3 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986), p.238.

[108] Hazra, *Upapuranas*, Vol. 1, p.30, fn. 6.

[109] J.W. Watson, "Sketch of the Kathis. Especially those of the tribe of Khachar and house of Chotila," *Indian Antiquary* IV (1875): p.105.

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The *Purāṇa*s and inscriptions record the defeat and subjugation of these deities at the hands of the re-invented royal brahmanical deities from the seventh or eighth centuries. However, the advent of the brahmanical cults into Gujarat was a slow and keenly contested process. In the eighth century, a Gurjara Pratihāra king was the first to adopt Śaivism as the royal cult and appoint brahmanas as royal priests, rewarding them with land grants.[110] In south Gujarat, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas had adopted Vaiṣṇavism, although they also made grants for the construction of solar and Jaina temples. The Cāvaḍās, who succeeded the Gurjara Pratihāras in controlling north Gujarat by the eighth century, seem to have resisted brahmanisation. Later Jaina writers claimed that Vanarāja (lord of the wilderness) Cāvaḍā was a devotee of Jainism and endowed a local Jaina temple, but there is no contemporary confirmation of this.

In spite of the fact that Gujarat was a ritually impure area, it housed several important shrines that became vital to expanding Brahmanism from the eighth century. The majority of these temples were Śaiva shrines, many of which incorporated or superseded local cults. Across most of north India, claims to royalty were usually backed by the construction of royal temples and invitations to brahmanas to reside in the area. In Gujarat, most such attempts at legitimation involved the construction of Śaiva shrines and land grants offered to brahmanas. Vaiṣṇava temples were also built in this period, but in most regions they were subsidiary to the Śaiva shrines.[111]

The next rulers of Gujarat were the Caulukyas whose patronage of Jainism ensured that their activities were recorded in great detail in the Jaina chronicles. The rule of Mūlarāja in the tenth century is associated with a flurry of brahmanical activity. His reign is the first time that the famous Śaiva temple of Somanath, to the far south-west of the Saurashtra peninsula, appears as the royal temple with a royal champion (although this may be a retrospective claim made by later writers).

An important shrine of Gujarat in the early period was the Somanath temple in the south-west of the Saurashtra peninsula. Somanath may be identified as a Śaiva temple in the eleventh century from its description by chroniclers who accompanied Maḥmūd of Ghazna. Evidently, this temple had already acquired considerable notoriety in the Muslim world as the embodiment of idolatry. In this period, it would seem that its upkeep was in the hands of local merchants and possibly chieftains. Mūlarāja is said to have made a pilgrimage to Somanath in the late tenth century and cleared the way for pilgrims. He was the first to affirm Somanath as the royal temple

[110] Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.33.
[111] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.21.

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of his dynasty. Subsequently, Caulukya rulers made sporadic visits to the temple and possibly contributed to its upkeep. By the time of the Veraval inscription of 1264, the temple and the town were regulated by a committee of five important citizens.[112]

The tale of Mūlarāja as told in later Caulukya chronicles credits him with restoring the pilgrim route to Somanath, thereby securing the blessings of the deity. On the way, Mūlarāja fought off a confederacy of barbarian chieftains including the Cuḍāsamā chieftain of Vanthali and his Muslim clansmen from Sind and Kacch. The *Dvyāśraya-kāvya* (c.1174) by a Jaina teacher at the court of the twelfth-century Caulukya ruler Siddharāja characterised the Cuḍāsamā as a barbarian and an enemy of settled civilisation who harassed pilgrims, ate beef and consumed liquor. On his return, Mūlarāja is also said to have built a Śaiva temple in Anhilvada, thus bringing to his own capital the blessings of the deity and reducing the necessity of pilgrimage to distant Somanath. He is also credited with making grants of land to brahmanas who were invited from the north to settle in the region. Several groups of brahmanas assert that their ancestors were granted land by Mūlarāja, claims that are to be found in several caste and shrine *Purāṇas*.[113]

One of the oldest sacral sites, first marked out by an Aśokan inscription and several centuries later, in the fourth century C.E. by the inscription of Skandagupta, is the sacred mountain of Girnar. The mountain is dotted with some of the most important shrines of Gujarat including Jaina, Muslim, Nāthpanthī and mother-goddess shrines. The mountain itself was worshipped and is a sacred site of great antiquity.

Buddhism and Jainism

There is considerable evidence for the spread of Buddhism in Gujarat from about the third century B.C.E. Apart from Aśoka's rock edicts in Girnar and Sopara (on the coast), there is material evidence in the form of *stupas* and *vihāras* from the Kṣatrapa period in the first century C.E. Records pertaining to the Valabhi kingdom also indicate the substantial prevalence of Buddhism. By the time of Hsuan Tsang's visit in the mid-seventh century, Buddhism had widespread but waning influence in the Valabhi territories of southern Saurashtra. The *vihāra* of Duddā, a woman belonging to the ruling family, was a well-known centre of Buddhist learning. The Buddhist university of Valabhi was also renowned even during the visit of I-Tsing in the

[112] Sircar, *Select Inscriptions II*, p.114.
[113] Uttamaram Durlabharam, *Tolaknibandha* (Ahmedabad: 1877), Narasimhadas Durlabharam Purohit, *Audichya Tolkiya Jatini Sthiti* (Ahmedabad: 1877). Also Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.161.

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eighth century and Buddhist scholars from Valabhi are known to have travelled to China where they were received with respect.[114]

It would seem that Buddhism waned along with the end of the Valabhi kingdom. The reasons may have been similar to those in contemporary Sind, where the monastic orders lost the support of the laity. The monastic orders of late Buddhism may have taken on other patrons and forms, transforming themselves in the process. For example, it has been suggested that the structure and hierarchies of the Aghorī order of renouncers is similar to that of Buddhists and they retain certain of their practices, such as begging for food only in the mornings.[115] Similarly, it is noticeable that the Nāth Panth began to be influential in Gujarat in the years following the decline of Buddhism and, again, its monastic hierarchies are similar to Buddhist ones. Whether a product of declining Buddhism or not, monastic orders, especially those affiliated to Śaivism, continued to exert a considerable influence on the religious landscape of Gujarat in the subsequent period.

The monastic non-brahmanical cult that came to have a much greater influence in Gujarat was Jainism. When Jainas moved westwards from the Ganga basin from about the third century C.E., one of their chief settlements was the cosmopolitan city of Mathura. Jaina tradition relates that two monks converted a local goddess who became a devout lay-woman and built a golden *stupa* there, in imitation of one on Mount Meru. This stupa became a contested site, claimed also by local Buddhists and Hindus, but it was miraculously proved to belong to the Jainas. By the first century C.E., Jaina lay people included the prosperous middle classes of the town, including traders, craftspersons and courtesans. This was also the time when the cult of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva at Mathura was gradually being eclipsed, to return only in the seventeenth century.[116] The strong local tradition of Kṛṣṇa at Mathura was also adopted by the Jainas who linked him with the twenty-second *tīrthankara* Neminātha.[117] This intertwining of the story of Kṛṣṇa with Nemi became popular later in Gujarat.

By the fourth and fifth centuries, Jaina groups were moving away from Mathura and the centre of the Gupta kingdom towards the territories of the Maitrakas of Valabhi in south-west Gujarat. The Jaina *sūtras* were first committed to writing in the early fifth century during a convention of Jaina preceptors in Valabhi. This council was attended exclusively by Śvetāmbaras, the White-Robed, an indication that western India was henceforth the domain of this sect while

[114] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.205.
[115] Ibid., p.203.
[116] C. Vaudeville, "Braj Lost and Found," in *Myths, Saints and Legends of Medieval India*, ed. Vasudha Dalmia (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.48.
[117] Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, 2nd ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 2002), p.236.

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the Digambaras or Sky-Clad became influential in south India. By the late seventh century, Jainas had acquired a considerable following in Gujarat, especially among urban merchant groups.

Although the great Jaina conference took place in Valabhi in the fifth century, later concentrations of the community were more in north Gujarat. It would seem that the mountain of Girnar in Saurashtra had already acquired a sanctity for the Jainas by this time. There are references in the *Kuvalayamālā* (c. 788 C.E.) to a Jaina named Śivacandraganı̣ who settled at Bhinnamāla (Śrīmāla or modern Bhinmal, southern Rajasthan) in the seventh century. His disciple Yakṣadattaganı̣ caused Gurjara-deśa (Gujarat) to be adorned with Jaina temples. Śrīmālī merchants, both Jaina and Hindu, did indeed fan out over Gujarat, acquiring considerable influence and wealth over time.[118] Jainas also spread out to Kacch, the Girnar region and the Valabhi region. By the Caulukya period, small settlements of Jainas were to be found in most of the towns of the region.

There is a legend in the *Kuvalayamālā* that Vanarāja Cāvaḍā (eighth century), the founder of Anhilvada, was assisted in acquiring his kingdom by a Jaina renouncer.[119] While Jainas were reluctant, by and large, to assume actual political power, from the tenth century they are to be found close to the centres of power in various capacities. After gaining considerable though contested political influence at the court of the Caulukyas, they retained an economic and moral influence out of proportion to their actual numbers throughout Gujarat's subsequent history. Correspondingly, the wealth and influence of the Jaina community resulted in the construction of a network of monumental Jaina shrines at various places in Saurashtra and Gujarat. Most of this building took place during the period when Jainism was the royal cult of the Caulukyas from the mid-eleventh century. A prolific textual tradition also grew up to regulate and prescribe rituals for the new shrines. This variant of royal and merchant-sponsored Śvetāmbara Jainism clearly privileged the worship of icons and spectacular shrines, such as those at Shatrunjaya and Mount Abu, were created for the purpose.

The moving frontier of Islam, c. 650-1200

In the context of Islam, there was no single frontier moving eastwards as in Bengal. Islamic influence penetrated Gujarat along the trade routes from the north and north-west and also by sea. The Arabs in Sind mounted raids into Gujarat and central India in the eighth and ninth centuries, but these did not give rise to sustained settlement or conversion of local communities. These were

[118] Bhabhooti Mal N. Parmar, *Cultural and Critical Study of Srimala Purana* (Jodhpur: Research Publishers, 1990), p.12.
[119] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.165.

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followed by periodic looting and iconoclastic forays beginning with Maḥmūd of Ghazna's invasion in 1025. It has been argued that the expansion of the Turkish-Muslim empire in North India from the twelfth century took place concurrently with the development of commercial operations on the coast: 'These developments – of the interior and the littoral – were closely linked and part of the wider process which characterized these centuries, the fusion of the world of sedentary agriculture with the frontier world of nomads, overland and maritime long-distance traders, of movable goods and precious metals.'[120] All through this period, Muslim traders and divines had settled in the ports of Gujarat. By the time 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's generals conquered parts of north Gujarat in 1297, Muslims had been living in Gujarat for six hundred years. There was significant activity by Muslim holy men and preachers of different denominations but again unlike in Bengal, there are few stories of the *ghāzī*, the Muslim warrior-preacher. Most stories and biographies of early Muslim proselytisers in Gujarat relate narratives of conversion by stealth and persuasion.

One of the first denominations to get a foothold in Gujarat was that of the Ismā'īlīs. The entry of Ismā'īlism into Gujarat was through two routes. The first was the sea route from the Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid caliphate in Egypt and its outposts and, after its decline in the eleventh century, from the Rasūlid kingdom of Yemen. The other was along the trade routes from Sind and Multan through Kacch and Rajasthan. Sind in the early years after the Arab conquest was the eastern outpost of Arab civilisation and was often a refuge for groups mobilising support to oppose the 'Umayyad and later, the 'Abbāsid Caliphates. The radical Ismā'īlī doctrine, which rejected the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, played a significant part in the politics of Sind from the late ninth century. A Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī mission was set up in Yemen in 883 from where a propagandist or *dā'ī* was sent to Sind.[121] The twelfth century saw considerable trade with the ports of the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī Caliphate of Egypt. Organised attempts were made by various orders of Ismā'īlīs to convert people in Gujarat, long before Sunni or ṣūfī conversion activity became widespread. By the time of the Fāṭimid Qādī al-Nu'mān in the tenth century, the *da'wa* had penetrated Multan, Gujarat and Punjab.[122]

In the reign of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mu'izz (953-75), a difficulty arose over a *dā'ī* of Sind accused of heresy. His offence was partly that while he was given credit for converting a large number of *majūs* (identified with sun-worshipping *maga-brāhmaṇas*) he was accused of

[120] Wink, *Al-Hind II*, p. 269.
[121] W. Ivanow, "Satpanth," in *Collectanea*, ed. W. Ivanow, Series A, No. 2 (Leiden: The Ismaili Society, E.J. Brill, 1948), p. 6.
[122] Abbas H. al-Hamdani, *The Beginnings of the Isma'ili Da'wa in Northern India* (Cairo, 1954), p.16.

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permitting them to 'follow their earlier practices, taking no notice of those prohibitions of God that did not exist in their former religion', with particular reference to dietary and matrimonial practices.[123] Ismā'īlī missionaries were sent to Gujarat very soon after Sind and from the outset they would seem to have carried out conversions a similar way. Again, convert communities in Gujarat were often not required to relinquish their former dietary and marriage practices and were encouraged to keep their Ismā'īlī affiliations secret. As a result, these conversions fitted into former identities.

The Ismā'īlīs in Multan secured political power early in the eleventh century but were destroyed by Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 1027. The mission in Multan remained in existence and Ismā'īlī revolts occurred here in 1041 and then against the Ghūrids in 1175. After the Nizārī-Musta'lī schism of 1094, the Nizārī variant of Ismā'īlism was introduced into Sind and that became the dominant form, with its main centre at Uchch, south of Multan. This time, proselytisation was aimed at the trading communities and sections of the Lohāṇā caste were converted.

In 1068, an Arab *dā'ī*, 'Abd Allāh arrived in Gujarat with two Indian assistants. Less than a decade later the existence of a flourishing Ismā'īlī community in Gujarat is confirmed by official letters of the Fāṭimid chancery. Accordingly, it has been suggested that the Muslim community in Bhadreshvar was of the Ismā'īlī order and the Ibrāhīm mentioned in the inscription was Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥāmidī, *dā'ī muṭlaq* of the Yemen and its neighbourhood as well as India and Sind.[124]

It was communities such as the settlement of Ismā'īlīs at Bhadreshvar who were responsible for the conversion to their faith of branches of local trading groups, the Lohāṇās and Bhāṭiās who came to call themselves Khojās. Ismā'īlī missionaries spread their faith along the 'frontier', among mobile groups. Many of the pastoralist and seafaring communities of the coast of Kacch and Saurashtra were converted by them, often using versions of Hindu mythology and ritual, local hero-tales and cults. Many of the convert communities still practice versions of the belief, or retain memories of it in their legends, rituals and burial practices.[125] Among these coastal communities were the pirates, skilled seafarers who foraged in the sea for their livelihood, so often remarked upon by the Arab merchants and mariners.

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[123] MacLean, *Arab Sind*, p. 132.
[124] Mehrdad Shokoohy, Manijeh Bayani-Wolpert, and Natalie Shokoohy, *Bhadresvar: The Oldest Islamic Monuments in India*, vol. 2, Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture, Supplements to Muqarnas (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), pp.54-55.
[125] For Rajasthan, see D.-S. Khan, *Conversion and Shifting Identities: Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan* (Delhi: Manohar, 1997), passim.

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The earliest Islamic structures in India have been identified as belonging to the Ismā'īlī community.[126] These are a set of buildings in the town of Bhadreshvar in Kacch which possess inscriptions dating from the late twelfth century. While 'Ibrāhīm' of the first inscription has been identified with the contemporary Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* then living in Yemen, the clinching evidence is provided by the *Jagaḍūcarita*. This verse biography of a Jaina merchant magnate of the twelfth century mentions that among Jagaḍū's good works was his construction or renovation of the mosque of the local Ismā'īlī community.[127]

The only definite evidence of Islamic proselytisation before 1200 C.E. pertains to the Ismā'īlī propagandists. While there may have been missionaries of other denominations active in Gujarat in this period, no archaeological or textual traces of their activities have survived. However, several later traditions record the secret conversion to their denomination of the greatest Caulukya ruler, Siddharāja Jayasiṃha (1094-1143). Siddharāja became the focus of many tales of secret adherence, a common feature of Ismā'īlī propaganda. The Bohrā or Musta'lī order of Ismā'īlīs claims that a brahmana, a minister and finally the king himself were impressed by the missionary's miracles and accordingly accepted Islam at his hands. As *taqiyya* or protective dissimulation is permissible for followers fearful of persecution, the fact that Siddharāja made no outward manifestation of his belief does not detract from the veracity of his conversion. Similarly, the Nizārī Ismā'īlī tradition also claims that their first missionary in Gujarat, Satgur Nūr also converted Siddharāja. The *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī* records some traditions of early Sunni missionaries who settled in Gujarat in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.[128] One of them, Sayyid Muḥammad Brahman, is again claimed as the agent of Siddharāja's conversion. In this instance, Sayyid Muḥammad, disguised as a brahmana cook, entered the service of the king. When his secret was eventually revealed, the king ordered him thrown into a furnace. Instead of his body, a heap of roses was discovered, a miracle which impressed the king.

While the *Mir'āt* mentions some other, seemingly non-Ismā'īlī missionaries of the period, it is clear that the first layer of conversion to Islam in Gujarat took place at the behest of Ismā'īlī missionaries. These early converts included some of the pastoralist communities of Sind, Kacch and Saurashtra, as well as urban occupational groups such as cooks, gardeners and artisans. The conversion of certain merchant groups such as the Bhāṭiās and Lohāṇās was a later

[126] Shokoohy, Bayani-Wolpert, and Shokoohy, *Bhadresvar*, p.54.
[127] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.18.
[128] Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi. Supplement*, trans. Syed Nawab Ali and C.N. Seddon, Gaekwad's Oriental Series No.XLIII (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1928), pp.41.

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development. This earliest layer of conversion was remarkably persistent. Although some of these groups later took up brahmanical cults or state-sponsored Sunni Islam, their bardic literature and folklore usually retain some traces of their Islamic past. It is also clear that the profile of the Muslim missionary in the early period fitted that of the Ismā'īlī missionaries – whose preferred method was to convert covertly through debate and by the demonstration of miracles. It is possible that non-Ismā'īlī missionaries also adopted similar tactics in imitation of the Ismā'īlīs. From this early period, there are few stories of heroic *ghāzīs* who attained martyrdom in the cause of the faith. Such biographies emerge roughly coincidentally with the invasion of 'Alā' al-Dīn in the late thirteenth century. Debate and miracles were also the forte of other cultic groups such as the Nāthpanthīs who were on the rise at this time and who evidently competed for a similar set of potential converts. Early efforts to spread Islam in India thus incorporated and manipulated local cultic techniques, becoming part of a range of cults competing for adherents, patronage and resources.

Conclusion

The early history of the territory of Gujarat already saw political divisions corresponding to eastern Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kacch. Any history of Gujarat must deal with the interactions between these three regions and their contiguous areas. As suggested, one way may be to view the history of the period in terms of three major movements. The first of these is pastoralism. Little of Gujarat was cleared for extensive agriculture and it is clear that politics was dominated by the ethos of the pastoralists entering the region from the first century C.E. As some of these pastoralist groups sedentarised, they began to be part of larger networks and hierarchies, in which real or invented descent emerged as the primary source of legitimation. This set of hierarchies was the status category later known as Rajput. The second feature was the merchant ethos. Merchants and merchant-pastoralists rose in significance from the eighth century as Gujarat became the primary location where the trade networks radiating out from north India met the rapidly expanding trade of the Indian Ocean. Many of these merchants settled along the great trade route running north to south, especially between southern Rajasthan and north Gujarat. In this period of the vast resources of trade, there was potential for the merchant to become a prince.

The third frontier was that of the extension of Hinduism and brahmanical cults into Gujarat. Again, from the eighth century, pretensions to royalty and membership of Rajput descent hierarchies were usually accompanied by the adoption of one or another reinvented Vedic deity. In Gujarat, this deity was usually Śiva, although there is little evidence that Śaiva worship ever became a widely popular cult. Popular affiliations usually tended to be to local animistic cults, or

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missionary cults such as those of the Ismā'īlīs or the Nāthpanthīs. The Jainism practised by many of the crucially important merchant groups often found royal favour. By the twelfth century, networks of both Jaina and brahmanical sites of pilgrimage were beginning to emerge all over Gujarat.

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2003 -State and Society in Gujarat c 1200-1500 (1005)

Chapter 2 **Settlement and authority in eastern Gujarat, c. 1250-1500**

From the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century and even later, Gujarat was still in the process of being 'settled'. Many led unsettled lives in this period, either moving into Gujarat or travelling from place to place within it. By the twelfth century, several large towns were in existence and manufacture and long-distance trade, both overseas and overland, were well established. The coastal towns were particularly prosperous and housed sizeable and entrenched colonies of local and itinerant merchants. In the hinterland, however, migration and mobility were the norm for all those engaged in trade, pilgrimage and politics.

While settled agriculture was well established in parts of Gujarat, it was not the only source of revenue for local political hierarchies. A general assumption of Indian economic history has been that pre-colonial states were reliant upon the exploitation of the labour of a sedentary peasant class and its agricultural productivity. While this may have been the case in other parts of north India, the situation seems to have been different in Gujarat. During the period of this study, the eastern strip of Gujarat was heavily urbanised and trade and even agriculture were largely monetised.[1] Cash crops such as cotton, indigo and sugarcane were a priority, while food-grains were grown on a subsistence basis or imported for cash from grain-surplus regions such as Malwa. The peasantry, defined either in caste or occupational terms, did not exclusively engage in agriculture nor were agriculturists strictly sedentary. Agriculture consisted largely of cash crops such as indigo or sugarcane and was often carried out only for part of the year by groups who also engaged in some kind of commodity production, trade or haulage. Economic or political circumstances often impelled the migration and resettlement of populations. Even agriculturists were thus obliged to be mobile. The case of Gujarat in this period may revise our ideas about the nature of pre-colonial economies in South Asia.

There is also evidence to indicate that political authority in central Gujarat was bound up with the trading activities of the region. It is now possible to challenge the traditional thesis that trade had little to do with the politics of the hinterland and that the rulers, in particular the sultans of Gujarat, did not derive significant benefit from it.[2] This view emerges from the idea that pre-colonial hinterland empires were primarily based on the exploitation of land resources in relation to which trade was largely autonomous. But it is clear that the repeated invasions of Gujarat and

[1] Jain, *Trade*, p.137.
[2] '... normally, rulers did not care what merchants did... it is the lack of political connections between ruler and merchant in Gujarati society which is crucial.' Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers*, p.2.

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the contestations for power within it, took place for a share in its fabled riches. It is also clear that the repositories of these riches were its temples and merchants. It is then difficult to understand the assumption that political strife in Gujarat was primarily to do with the control of *agrarian* resources. The historiography of Gujarat bears out this assumption, so that political histories of Gujarat take little interest in its trade and the numerous histories of the Indian Ocean trade, especially of the role of Gujarati traders and products, assume that political authority on land was irrelevant to it. In addition, the overland trade and the networks that covered much of central and northern India and beyond tend to be neglected. However, settlement patterns in Gujarat and corresponding local political authority clearly indicate the extent to which settlement and administration were governed by the necessities of trade. Most of the campaigns of the sultans were to safeguard trade for their own benefit and secure their supplies of resources.

After the establishment of rule by governors sent by the Delhi sultans in the early years of the fourteenth century, urban settlements grew around the new forts in response to the new patrons and political alignments. However, it was only after the establishment of the Gujarat sultanate in the early fifteenth century that rulers began to invest in the long-term economic and political stability of the region. The sultans personally supervised the construction of several new forts, city walls and even entire towns. They ruled from three capitals in the course of the century, of which two, Ahmadabad and Champaner, were built by them. Building and settling towns did not only mean the construction of buildings suitable for the court. Provision was also made for merchants, traders and artisans and agriculturists to settle and cultivate the surrounding areas. Merchant families became well entrenched within the inner citadels of the important cities and in some cases continued to live there for several centuries. In the case of Ahmadabad, courtiers were encouraged to build similar suburbs of their own outside the city walls.

During the fifteenth century, the state progressed from operating out of a series of fortified garrisons to evolving an overarching structure ensuring the safety of settlements and even more importantly, the security of the roads. While it was important to provide secure settlements for merchants and producers, it was vital to ensure that the routes they traversed were safe. This facilitated the movement of goods, pastoralists with their animals, pilgrims and most importantly, the army. One of the most important criteria recorded by chroniclers to signify good government was the safety of the roads. According to the chronicler Sikandar, during Maḥmūd Begaḍā's rule (1458-1511), the *faujdār* of Ahmadabad, Muḥāfiẓ Khān, 'made such excellent

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arrangements that thieving and high-way robbery became extinct, ... and the merchants opened their loads on the roads and stages.'[3]

Thus, while settlement and re-settlement were important themes in the history of Gujarat, political power was still associated with mobility and the control of resources such as horses, military equipment and warriors. All those who sought power or wealth had to be constantly mobile or had to patronise mobile groups. The Delhi governors and then the sultans had to maintain close contacts with merchants and carrier communities to remain informed and supplied with sufficient resources. Their survival over rival chieftains depended upon the superior patronage and protection they could offer merchants, which set up a reciprocal system of dependence. The rulers needed arms, boats, horses, precious metals and luxury goods, while in turn they could provide the merchants with security, a stable currency, regular profits and a secure trade network that encompassed most of northern India.

While the sultans made every effort to encourage settlement and the growth of towns and agriculture, it was, paradoxically, equally necessary for them to safeguard the very mobility of Gujarat that had enabled its prosperity. Their efforts had to be directed towards a more effective regulation of that mobility. The extension of political control and settlement meant that roads were more secure and Gujarat attracted a growing trade and pilgrim traffic. Groups of artisans, traders and priests gravitated towards the towns in search of security and patronage. By the early fifteenth century, the sultans had acquired regular access to arms supplies, horses, elephants and ships through their patronage and safeguarding of trade. It was this superior access to military resources that enabled them to enforce tribute collection from subordinate chiefs. Although the last two governors of the Delhi sultanate, Farḥat al-Mulk and Ẓafar Khān, had been able to manipulate immigrant politics and relations with merchants to form long-term political alliances, it was only in the second half of the reign of Maḥmūd Begaḍā (r.1453-1511) that a stable and indisputably paramount court society emerged. The effective compromise that was achieved in sultanate Gujarat between settlement and mobility may thus indicate a new model of settled civilisation in the fifteenth century.

Settlement

Traditions of migration are often helpful in the reconstruction of political events or economic changes. Migration and settlement can be traced through inscriptions, land-grants and the traditions of the communities or their representatives. Such traditions were often preserved by

[3] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.54, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.126.

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bards or genealogists, vital members of the social infrastructure for many communities who were upwardly mobile and therefore required records in written or oral form. For other communities, these traditions were recorded by community members or priests in the *purāṇa* genre, at times in Sanskrit but later often in Gujarati.[4] The caste *purāṇas* are an important form of information about the histories of communities and their manuscript versions have not yet been systematically collected or interpreted. Several caste traditions and claims were published by the communities in the early part of the twentieth century as efforts to unite their members, often by exclusion, codify their customs, make claims to status, territory or antiquity, or simply to declare their separate existence. Many of them drew upon manuscript caste *purāṇas*, or recorded oral traditions from within the community. Most of the communities for whom records exist, either in the form of contemporary inscriptions and grants or traditions recorded later, indicate practices of migration. Migration and settlement are among the chief motifs of the caste *purāṇas*. Other chronicles, such as the fourteenth century *Jagaḍūcarita*, also mention the migration of the protagonist's ancestors from Śrimāla in Rajasthan to eastern Kacch. Other accounts record migrations in search of economic opportunity; in response to invitations by rulers or legendary figures; in response to famine or political tumult and so on.

It is significant that settlement and migration were so commonly recorded. The caste *purāṇas*, with numerous instances of such settlements, were published in the early twentieth century to make claims for status or preferment to the colonial government. It is possible that earlier records of migration and settlement were also made for the purpose of presentation to governments or local authorities. Any settled state inevitably encouraged settlement of 'wild' areas and often invited aspirants for state favour to conquer territories and then 'settle' or 'populate' them, typically with peasants, merchants and religious figures. Inducements, in the form of land control or tax relief, were offered to peasants to clear scrub or forest and cultivate such areas after their former inhabitants had been pacified or defeated. For example, the Kaṇbīs were induced by Aḥmad Shāh to settle the Charotar area after the local Kolīs had been defeated.[5] This region soon became the most agriculturally productive in Gujarat.

There were three major forms of settlement in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Gujarat. The first was settlement by conquest. Apart from the Turkish invaders and their camp-followers,

[4] Several castes in Gujarat, including brahmanas and traders as well as occupational groups such as coppersmiths, barbers and wrestlers have their own *purāṇas*. See for example, B.J. Sandesara and P.N. Mehta, eds., *Mallapuranam: A rare Sanskrit text on Indian wrestling especially as practised by the Jyesthimallas* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1964).
[5] Gokaldas Somabhai Patel and Ashokbhai Gokaldas Patel, *History of the Patidars of Gujarat* (Ahmedabad: 1986), p. 21.

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several local or immigrant chieftains and bands of adventurers captured lands, towns, forts and routes in eastern Gujarat in this period. In some cases, chieftains were accompanied by their entire clans and livestock who settled and defended the captured or granted territory. Other adventurers and mercenaries attached themselves to patrons and received grants of land and military or administrative offices.

Other settlement was for economic reasons: for cultivation, manufacture or trade. Artisans and traders flocked to the manufacturing towns of eastern Gujarat from the eleventh century. Several communities migrated to Gujarat in search of economic opportunity – for example, the traders and brahmanas from Śrīmāla in southern Rajasthan began to enter eastern Gujarat at this time and many of them achieved prominence as priests, bankers and merchants. Brahmanas came from even further afield in search of patrons. The Kaṇbī peasants have a tradition of migration from Panjab. Within Gujarat, they settled along the major trade routes and moved into the new towns such as Adalaj, Champaner and Ahmadabad. In some cases, peasants and artisans were given incentives by the government to settle in particular areas. Along the coast, there were significant settlements of 'foreign' traders in the coastal ports, particularly, in this period, at Cambay.

The third significant category of settlement in Gujarat in this period was that of religious figures. As mentioned above, there were significant migrations of brahmana groups into Gujarat who found patrons among the scores of local chieftains seeking to legitimise their status as they sedentarised and established courts. Other brahmanas attached themselves to merchants anxious to patronise places of worship and also to cash in on the flourishing pilgrim traffic. Some were even patronised by the Gujarat sultans.[6] Religious endowments were also a good way to invest money for spiritual and temporal gain. In the thirteenth century, Vastupāla and Tejahpāla acquired much wealth from exploiting traders. When the Muslim trader Sayad was arrested at Cambay, his wealth was confiscated and much of it passed to the brothers. Their wives advised them 'Spend your wealth on a hill top. All can see it; no one can carry it away.' Accordingly, the brothers adorned the summits of Abu, Girnar and Shatrunjaya with magnificent temples.[7] Several ṣūfīs and Muslim scholars also found their way to Gujarat, especially after the foundation of the

[6] Sandesara, ed., *Gangadasa-pratapavilasa*, pp.17-18. The writer (c. 1450) mentions that he visited the court of the Sultan Muḥammad at Ahmadabad and silenced all the scholars there. Maḥmūd Begaḍa (r. 1458-1511) also had a Sanskrit eulogy, the *Rājavinoda,* composed by a brahmana poet, Udayarāja. Udayaraja, *Rajavinodamahakavyam or Mahmuda-suratrana-charita*, Rajasthan Puratan Grantha-mala, granthak 8 (Jaipur: Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, 1956).

[7] A.V. Kathavate, *Kirtikaumudi of Somesvara*, Bombay Sanskrit Series, No. xxv (Bombay: 1883), pp. xviii-xx, B.J. Sandesara, *Literary Circle of Mahamatya Vastupala and its Contribution to Sanskrit Literature*, Singhi Jain Series, no. 33 (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1953), p.11.

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Gujarat sultanate, as the sultans were eager to attract prominent Muslim scholars to their court. Rent-free or stipendiary estates were granted to several Muslim divines in perpetuity. The estates of the Bukhārī ṣūfīs at Vatwa and that of Shaykh Aḥmad Khattū at Sarkhej became important counterpoints to the sultans' court at Ahmadabad – with some parallels to the Chishti ṣūfīs' relations with the sultans of Delhi.[8] Ismā'īlī preachers had also been prominent in Gujarat and one of them, Imām Shāh, was granted territory close to Ahmadabad.

Conquest and settlement in the thirteenth and fourteenth century

The sultanate of Gujarat was established in the early fifteenth century, in an area of eastern Gujarat that had been sought after and contested since the late tenth century when Mularāja established the Caulukya dynasty. With the rise of the Caulukyas, a strip of territory extending from north to south, roughly from the area north of Patan to Cambay on the coast, became the core territory from where Gujarat was ruled in the subsequent centuries. This eastern strip of Gujarat included, by the twelfth century, most of the prosperous towns, manufacturing centres and agriculturally productive territories and was the 'productive hinterland' that supplied goods for the wide-ranging trade from Gujarat's ports. From the tenth century, the Caulukyas stimulated internal and external trade. They constructed a 'military road', connecting Anhilvada with the Saurashtra peninsula.[9] Eastern Gujarat was also on the most popular trade route that connected northern India with the ports. Most caravans to and from the north and north-west were obliged to pass through eastern Gujarat through the Abu-Palanpur ingress into southern Rajasthan.

The territories ruled by the Caulukyas included most of the eastern area. Their decline and replacement by their erstwhile subordinates, the Vāghelās, in the thirteenth century led to incursions of other groups from the north and northwest towards the core eastern territory. For example, the Jhālās, first heard of in eastern Kacch, were driven further east by the incursions of branches of the Sūmrās from southern Sind They took refuge with Karṇa Vāghelā around 1290, receiving land in reward.[10] After 'Alā' al-Dīn's conquest, they took control of the area to the west of the Vāghelā territories. Similarly, the Gohils who ruled an area west of the Sabarmati at the end of the thirteenth century, moved south-east into the coastal area of Valabhi with the help of the Mers.[11] By the time of the campaigns of Muḥammad b. Tughluq, c. 1351, the Gohils were a prominent threat to shipping and controlled the strategic island of Piram at the mouth of the Gulf

[8] See Simon Digby, "The sufi *shaykh* as a source of authority in mediaeval India," *Purusartha: Islam et société en Asie du Sud* 9 (1986).
[9] Jain, *Trade*, p.109.
[10] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, pp.285-290.
[11] Ibid., pp.295-309.

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of Cambay from where they preyed on both merchant caravans and ships.[12]

Again, the Rāṭhoḍs of Idar, to the north of Patan, rose to prominence only after the rule of Arjunadeva Vāghelā (1267-1280) whose inscriptions show that Idar was within his territories.[13] The Rāṭhoḍs, once Caulukya subsidiaries, took the mountain fortress of Idar from a Kolī chieftain in the early fourteenth century. The story is that they were bribed with the revenues of Idar by the dissatisfied Nāgar brahmana minister of the Kolīs.[14]

Large pastoralist groups moved into Gujarat in the wake of famine, persecution or loss of political control or simply in search of opportunity. The Soḍhās, for example, were driven south from Sind by famine in the late thirteenth century and were employed by the Vāghelās to suppress the Bhīl chieftains of the Sabarmati valleys. The attraction to enter eastern Gujarat was the lure of its considerable commercial and pilgrim traffic as well as the unsettled political conditions in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when territory and patronage were up for grabs. It does not seem that the incoming clans made agriculture their main occupation: they possibly continued as armed pastoralist clans whose cattle or animal wealth was their main livelihood. Local clans presumably regulated, taxed, protected and on occasion robbed the trade and pilgrim caravans passing through their territories.

The decline of Vāghelā rule followed by the invasion by 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's generals allowed various groups to stake claims to political control of parts of the eastern strip up to the prosperous coast. 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's generals invaded eastern Gujarat in 1299 and sacked Asaval, Anhilvada Patan, (which was abandoned by the Vāghelā ruler), Somanath, Vanthali and Cambay. They gained large spoils from looting the prosperous Jaina and foreign merchants of Cambay, then returned to Delhi. Another invasion was sent out in 1304-5, following which the Vāghelā ruler again abandoned Patan and fled to Deogir. By 1306, the first governor sent out from Delhi, Alp Khān, former governor of Multan, was in residence in Patan.

Immigration continued throughout the period of the governors of the Delhi sultanate (1297-1407) and trade seems to have carried on unabated, seemingly unaffected by political vicissitudes.[15] The governors sent from Delhi employed the same tactics as their predecessors, the Vāghelās and Caulukyas, of inviting armed bands or pastoralist clans to settle and pacify

[12] Ibid., pp. 307-9.
[13] Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, p. 180.
[14] 'Kolī' was a catch-all term for the mountain and forest chieftains of eastern Gujarat who were encountered by settlers and merchants in the region. Some of them intermarried with incoming clans, and later claimed degraded Rajput status. Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.206.
[15] On the stability of the Gujarat currency, see Deyell, *Living without Silver*, pp. 120-125, 240.

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territories, in return for the local revenues and the promise of protection. According to S.C. Misra, at this point, 'The Turks succeeded in breaking down the apex of the Rajput power-structure but not its lower echelons.'[16] He suggests that local landholders and chieftains remained powerful while offering nominal submission to the Delhi governor and that Delhi power was maintained through garrisons in the main cities, while the countryside remained unsubdued. The governors sent by the sultans of Delhi based themselves in Patan and established garrisons in several other towns. Misra's analysis suggests that the Vāghelās were replaced by the Delhi governors in a smooth transfer of power, while the positions of the other players in local politics, the 'Rajputs', remained essentially unchanged.

This analysis cannot be supported. The decline of Vāghelā power and the Turkish invasion combined to create a virtual free-for-all in the eastern plains. Even before the Turkish invasion, Vāghelā control was seriously reduced and the Vāghelās were hardly more powerful than neighbouring chieftaincies such as the Jhālās or Cuḍāsamās.[17] Central and eastern Gujarat in the early fourteenth century was prime territory for migrant bands of warriors in search of patronage, alliance or marriage as described by Dirk Kolff.[18] As described above, the Jhālās, Gohils and Rāṭhoḍs, all powerful chieftaincies by the mid-fourteenth century, moved in to snatch territory in eastern Gujarat. The eastern hill fortress of Champaner with its strategic position between Malwa and Gujarat was also built in this period.[19]

Other minor chieftains of the Narmada and Mahi river valleys, as well as Bhīl and Kolī chieftains, acquired significant territory and resources. The Godhra region in the eastern hills was controlled by a cattle-herding chieftain named Ghughula in the mid-thirteenth century who had to be chastised for plundering the caravans that passed through his territory on their way to the coast.[20] The central region around Asaval was controlled by Bhīl or Kolī chieftains until the 1420s and the plains of Charotar, the main agricultural area of the fifteenth century, were still uncleared and controlled by Bhīl and Kolī chiefs.[21] The Bhīls repeatedly appear as a threatening force: immigrants such as the Gohils and the Soḍhās were required to suppress Bhīl threats in return for the refuge and vassalage they were able to secure. Bhīls were a constant threat from hilly and forest areas: the ravines of the Sabarmati, the forests of Banswara and Dungarpur and the forests around Junagadh among others.

[16] Misra, *Rise*, p. 66.
[17] During the late Vāghelā period, the scope of the Gujarat currency, and by implication, Vāghelā political control, were constricted. Deyell, *Living without Silver*, p. 230.
[18] Kolff, *Naukar*, pp. 71-85.
[19] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p. 354.
[20] Jain, *Trade*, pp.45,48 citing the Vastupālacarita of Jinaharṣa.
[21] S.A. Khan, ed., *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Bibliotheca Indica (Calcutta: 1860-62), pp. 396-402.

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The Bhīls, as they appear in the bardic and *purāṇic* narratives, do not seem to be aboriginal forest dwelling 'savages' and were well within the pale of the acceptable as allies or even marriage partners. Marriage with a Bhīl woman would degrade the status of aspirant Rajputs, but the descendants of the union would be referred to as Kolīs, not as outcastes. The Kolīs seem to have functioned as an intermediate caste. A Gohil chief contemporaneous to Maḥmūd Begaḍā is said to have married the daughter of a Bhīl from Sihor who assisted him in his battle against the *'mleccha'*. Their descendants were referred to as Gohil Kolīs.[22] In addition, the Bhīls had political power in their own right and were allies worth having if necessity arose. This probably indicates that the overarching 'Rajput' identity which later developed was able, in this period, to assimilate certain powerful Bhīl clans and chieftainships. The distance between the Bhīls and the Rajputs is not so great as might be assumed from the 'Great Tradition' of Rajput identity in which 'Rajput' is equated with 'aristocrat'. Before the fourteenth century and on occasion even later, political power and corresponding status were available to Bhīls and similar groups.

There were also local chieftains who had converted to Islam, such as the Soḍhās and the Parwārīs, one of whom briefly became a governor of Gujarat in 1317-18, while his kinsman Khusraw Khān briefly styled himself sultan in Delhi in 1320.[23]

During the rule of Muḥammad b. Tughluq, Cambay and Gujarat were administered by the *wazīr* Khwāja Jahān who commanded the loyalty of the inhabitants, 'most of them were infidels and some were rebels who would fortify themselves in the mountains.'[24] When a rich Cambay merchant, Malik al-Tujjār al-Kazarūnī was granted the *iqṭā'* of Cambay in his stead, Khwāja Jahān incited his 'infidel' followers to attack and kill Malik al-Tujjār. Several Afghan adventurers who had accompanied the Turkish invasion similarly entered the fray to acquire strongholds for themselves and soon controlled forts including those in Baroda, Dabhoi, Bharuch and near Cambay.[25] They quickly acquired powerful local status and their support or lack of it could tilt the balance for any governor sent out from Delhi.[26] In 1344, a group of Afghans in the vicinity of Cambay and Baroda defied the local governor and entered Cambay where they 'plundered the royal treasury and the property of private individuals and that of Ibn al-Kaulami,

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[22] Enthoven and Edwardes, eds., *Imperial Gazetteer*, p.211.
[23] Misra, *Rise*, pp. 91-92.
[24] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.68.
[25] Ibid., p.113.
[26] The Afghan chiefs may be identical with or part of the *amīrān-i-ṣadah*, a term used by Baranī and the later Tughluqid writers, but not used by earlier writers. Misra, *Rise*, p.98.

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the merchant'.[27] The rebellion proved serious for the sultan, as other Afghans in Multan and Daulatabad also rebelled and in Cambay, other 'turbulent and disaffected people' joined the rebels. The Afghans took charge of much of central Gujarat and besieged the sultan's advance guard at the fort of Bharuch and dispersed only when the sultan himself arrived. After the defeat, many of the Afghan *amīrs* were executed, while others escaped to Khandesh, or took refuge with local chieftains.[28] Soon after this episode, the Afghans again assisted the rebel Taghai, in the pursuit of whom the sultan spent the last years of his life.[29]

The Delhi governor was thus obliged to negotiate with and keep the upper hand over a large number of belligerent local interests. In the thirteenth century, land revenue was not the most significant source of income for the Caulukyas and Vāghelās: the greater part of the revenues came from taxes on trade.[30] There are no indications that the situation changed with the advent of the Delhi governors in the fourteenth century. Taxation of trade, octroi, pilgrim taxes and tribute from subsidiary chieftains continued to be the main source of income.

By the 1390s, reports reached Delhi that Farḥat al-Mulk had failed to remit the revenues of the *khāliṣa* (crown) lands to the central treasury and was 'oppressing' the locals. Subsequently, Ẓafar Khān, the son of a peasant convert who had become a confidant of Fīrūz Shāh, was sent out to recapture the province for the sultanate. Ẓafar Khān's route to Gujarat was the shortest possible: en route, he halted at Nagor, where he received a delegation from Cambay who complained about Farḥat al-Mulk's tyranny. They were reassured and Ẓafar Khān proceeded towards Patan. After preliminary negotiations failed, Ẓafar Khān met Farḥat al-Mulk's army, 'consisting mostly of Hindus', at Kambhoi near Patan.[31] Farḥat was decisively defeated and killed while fleeing from the field.

Ẓafar Khān then dispatched agents to take control of the country and purge the area of officials who may have had loyalties to the former governor. He installed himself in the name of

[27] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.114.
[28] Misra, *Rise*, p. 111.
[29] See Digby, "Muhammad bin Tughluq's Last Years in Kathiavad and his Invasions of Thattha."
[30] Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, pp. 256-259.In the thirteenth century, agriculture seems to have been largely geared towards the production of goods for trade, and apart from certain foodstuffs, taxes and revenues were collected largely in cash. (p. 253). While rice, wheat and pulses were produced for subsistence, sugarcane, indigo and cotton were the cash crops that played a vital economic role for Gujarat. Milk products such as ghee were also an important item of trade.
[31] Abu al-Qâsim Firishta, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India till the year 1612: Translated from the original Persian of Mahomed Kasim Ferishta (1570-1614)*, trans. John Briggs, vol. IV (London: 1829; reprint, 1990), p.2.

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the Delhi sultan at Patan, conducted formal ceremonies and bestowed robes and distinctions.[32] Thus, having pacified the crucial urbanised eastern strip of Gujarat, Ẓafar Khān was, for the rest of his life, engaged in a struggle against the chieftains and confederacies that threatened his frontiers.

Settlement and control in the fifteenth century – building forts and capitals

At the end of the fourteenth century, power was concentrated around the area of Cambay, although the seat of the governors was nominally at Patan. Subsequently, power shifted inland. Within the eastern territory, centres of influence changed and shifted depending upon political circumstances. The sultans used three capitals in the fifteenth century, all within the core eastern region. For most of the century, the sultans were obliged to be mobile in order to be prepared for threats from different directions and this led to rapid but massive construction of forts and citadels.

In the fourteenth century the main threat was from the north and northwest, i.e., from Delhi, and the capital was accordingly in Patan in North Gujarat. Aḥmad Shāh then built Ahmadabad, south of Patan, after the northern frontier had been largely pacified and the main threats were from Saurashtra, not far to the west and from the hill chieftains from the east. After his decisive military victory in conclusion of a long and expensive military campaign over the Māṇḍalik ruler of Junagadh, Begaḍā built an alternative or subsidiary capital in Junagadh, renamed Mustafabad. Later, it was in response to the threat of invasion from Malwa and allied hill chieftains in the eastern hilly region between Gujarat and Malwa that Maḥmūd Begaḍā built a capital for himself in Champaner, at the edge of the mountainous region, which possessed a lookout hill from where aggression from the east could easily be spied. Champaner was also the site of his greatest military victory – against the Paṭāi Rāval who had, from his mountain fortress, been a thorn in the flesh of his predecessors. Building a capital here represented taking over the military advantages that the Paṭāi Rāval had enjoyed.

The region of Ahmadabad, Kheda, Bharuch, Cambay and parts of the northern regions around Patan and Siddhpur were among the few areas ruled directly by the sultans although, at the outset, it was only the top rung of the local ruling hierarchy that was done away with; the bulk of the revenue-sharing hierarchy remaining intact on condition of payment of tribute. But even in these areas, such as the district of Ahmadabad, large tracts remained in the hands of Bhīl and Kolī

[32] S.C. Misra, ed., *Tarikh-i-Mahmud Shahi* (Baroda: M.S. University, 1988), p.6, S.C. Misra and M.L. Rahman, eds., *Mir'at-i-Sikandari* (Baroda: M.S. University, 1961), p. 17.

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chiefs.[33] Further south, in Surat, the chief at Kanrej had submitted to the Muslim rulers in the fourteenth century and was allowed to remain autonomous. In 1373, Fīrūz Shāh built a fort here to safeguard against the Bhīls. Another small chieftain of the region was that of Sunth, probably related to the Panwārs of Malwa. The region of Reva Kantha, by the banks of the Narmada, was largely controlled by the Bhīls and Kolīs, except for the fort of Champaner and its Cauhāṇ chieftain. To the east, the region of Mahi Kantha was also dominated by Bhīl and Kolī chieftains. Rajpipla was ruled by the Gohils after 1470, but had an arrangement with the Ahmadabad sultans to provide 1000 foot and 300 horsemen whenever necessary.[34]

Before Aḥmad Shāh became sultan, his first campaign was against the Kolīs of the village of Asaval who, 'having thrown off their allegiance, took to brigandage and highway robbery.'[35] Soon after Aḥmad Shāh became the ruler in 1411, the first challenge to his authority came from a confederacy based at the other important manufacturing centre of Baroda. The instigators of this conspiracy included Aḥmad Shāh's cousin or uncle Fīrūz Khān, the *muqṭa'* of Baroda, assisted by his brothers and Jīvandās and Prayāgdās Khatrī and later by Raṇmal, the ruler of Idar. In this conflict, Aḥmad was supported by the former *muqṭa'* of Baroda, Malik Bektars, an Afghan chieftain.[36] It would thus seem that at least part of the still-powerful Afghan lobby of Gujarat supported Aḥmad's claims to rule Gujarat.

Aḥmad Shāh subsequently founded Ahmadabad in the vicinity of Asaval, on the eastern bank of the river Sabarmati. Asaval was at a strategic place for the transportation of goods to Cambay and the former chieftain had evidently derived considerable benefit from the goods passing through his territories. Its conquest thus secured Aḥmad a site that was conveniently located for the safe transport of goods to Cambay and by its location would help effectively subdue and safeguard the entire surrounding region. It was also conveniently located against threats from the west – i.e. from Saurashtra and within a few days march of the main threat, the eastern frontier with Malwa and the chieftains of the eastern hills.

The establishment of Ahmadabad as the capital was begun by the building of the Bhadra citadel in 1411. This was soon followed by the royal palace and the Jāmi' mosque. The city was built in a planned way. Aḥmad Shāh diverted the course of the Hathmati to the Sabar, to increase

[33] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, pp.10-11, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, pp.23-24.
[34] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, pp. 230-245.
[35] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.10, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.23.
[36] Z.A. Desai, *Persian and Arabic Epigraphy of Gujarat* (Baroda: M.S. University, 1982), p. 18.

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the water supply to Ahmadabad.[37] Separate quarters were built for different kinds of artisans and tradespeople. He also settled weavers, craftsmen and merchants in the city. Religious grantees were given yearly stipends and arrangements were made for the recipients of rent-free lands and their descendants, so that daughters received half the shares of the sons.

Aḥmad then continued with strategic fortification in his territories: the citadel of Ahmadabad was followed by building and repairing forts along the eastern border with Malwa. He constructed 'fortified *thānas*' in the eastern hills and repaired the century-old fort of Kareth.[38] Later he founded the northern town of Ahmadnagar (now Himmatnagar) on the banks of the Hathmati river, in order to have a nearby fort from which to take on the chieftain of Idar.

Aḥmad's reign was the period when the *vāṇṭā* tenure system, peculiar to Gujarat, was first elaborated.[39] During the sultanate period, land control was farmed out and tribute payments were the major source of income from subordinates. Large parts of Gujarat were had not yet been settled for agriculture even by the fifteenth century. For example, the most productive agricultural zone at present, the Charotar region, now associated with the prosperous agricultural Pāṭīdār community, is reported to have been settled by the Kaṇbīs only after Aḥmad Shāh subdued the turbulent Mehwāsīs of the region.[40]

The sultans gradually promoted settlement and agriculture in their territories, often through courtiers who were granted land and encouraged to develop them. A Persian inscription of 1452 from the Ahmadabad suburb of Rakhyal relates the terms of a royal grant made by Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh to the courtier Malik Sha'bān:

> Upon a petition being made in our world-refuge royalty and august kingly court, by our favourite servant and special well-wisher, Malik Sha'ban ....; we, in compliance with the request of the said Malik, through the plenitude of our Royal bounty and abundance of Imperial favours, endow upon him, his children and descendants to their remotest generation, six ploughs (*juftwar*) of land, out of the Mauza' Rakhyal, a dependency of the circuit of the renowned city of Ahmadabad, in which the said Malik has caused wells to be dug, trees to be planted and channels to be made – aforesaid being included in the endowment. Consequently it is incumbent upon the officers in charge of the circuit of the renowned city that they leave the said land together with the gardens, the wells and the trees, to the posterity and progeny of the said Malik, and make no change or variation in the grant so that they fall not under the condemnation of the verse

[37] V.A. Janaki, *The Commerce of Cambay from the Earliest Period to the Nineteenth Century*, Geography Research Paper No.10 (Baroda: M.S. University of Baroda, 1980), p. 20.
[38] Misra and Rahman, eds., *MS*, p. 21.
[39] For more discussion of land tenure, see Chapter 5.
[40] Patel, *Vadnagara Kanbis*, p. 22.

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– 'And he who changes it after he has heard it, the wrong of this shall be on those who change it.' (Qur'ān II, 177).[41]

Architecture and politics

The decline of Caulukya power in the late twelfth century led to a century of changes in the religious landscape of Gujarat and the development of a religious market-place as missionaries and propagandists poured into the region in search of patrons and converts. Caulukya decline also coincided with a fall in patronage to monumental temple building, largely associated in Gujarat with Śaiva temple complexes. Meanwhile, Jaina structures continued to be built. A major contributor to Jaina building was the minister-merchant Vastupāla and his brother Tejahpāla who built or renovated widely in this period. There was also an increased emphasis on civic buildings, in particular water-structures, usually built in arid areas to aid agriculture or along trade routes for the benefit of travellers and pilgrims.

The patronage of religious structures in medieval Gujarat served several purposes for donors. Constructing or renovating religious structures was a source of merit to the donor, whether Hindu, Jaina or Muslim. It could also be a way of investing surplus wealth which could bring returns in the form of increased pilgrim revenues. It also gained the donor respect and political influence. Many donations signalled the donor's bid for political recognition or local significance, spelt out in accompanying inscriptions.

The tradition of building monumental Hindu temples began to decline from about 1250, even before the Khaljī invasion from Delhi. However, this did not affect networks of pilgrimage which continued to develop under sultanate rule. Wealthy Hindus, especially chieftains, could no longer make monumental temples in the Caulukya style, but more people were now being attracted to extant shrines, saints, tombs and ancient cult sites such as Dvaraka and Girnar. On the other hand, Jainas could still, if not build new temple complexes, keep the older ones in good repair and make donations towards their upkeep. This bears out the argument that after the initial iconoclasm and plundering of invading armies died down, the sultanate was concerned with controlling only those temples that were seen to be associated with local chieftains and their political power.[42] As the Jainas pragmatically stayed away from political association in the

[41] James Burgess, *Muhammadan Architecture of Ahmadabad* (1900), vol.1, Desai, *PAEG*, p.21, Ziyaud-Din A. Desai, *Arabic, Persian and Urdu Inscriptions of West India: A Topographical List* (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1999), no.14, Ch. Mohammad Ismail and Munshi Fazil, eds., *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, vol. 2-5 (1921-22), pp.2-5.

[42] Richard M. Eaton, "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States," in *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.117-122.

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fourteenth century, their temples were left unmolested, while the Delhi governors and sultans went on repeated campaigns to put down recalcitrant chieftains and their regnal temples.

Monumental public architecture in Gujarat in this period consisted of fortifications and town walls, water-structures and religious buildings such as temples, mosques, tombs and shrines, all of which were built to last, usually in stone. It is significant that there is little evidence throughout the period for solidly-built permanent marketplaces. One of the rare commercial buildings that appears in an epigraph is a customs building from 1387 in Cambay.[43] The inscription actually records the construction of a water-shed inside the Customs Office by one Shaykhzāda Badr. Here, while the meritorious act of providing water has been recorded by the donor, there is no epigraph for the customs building itself. While we have accounts of lofty and grand merchants' dwellings in cities like Cambay and Patan, very little survives of domestic architecture. Although some of the oldest sections of the walled cities may date back to the fifteenth century, houses in these areas were usually wooden and have survived because they were constantly occupied, renovated and rebuilt. According to Baṭṭūṭa, the great Cambay merchants competed against each other to build the most impressive homes and a detailed archaeological survey of the town may reveal traces of these residences but on the whole, even the dwellings of rulers and sultans have not stood the test of time.[44]

According to accompanying inscriptions, fortifications and town walls were usually constructed on the orders of local or supra-local rulers. A bilingual inscription in Persian and Sanskrit from 1395 from Mangrol records that a fort with iron and steel gates was constructed during Ẓafar Khān's governorship by Malik Yaʿqūb, the governor of Soraṭh, under the supervision of his brother Malik Mūsā, *kotwāl* of the region.[45] In 1404, Ẓafar Khān built a fort in Kapadvanj on the request of a local official.[46] Religious structures, on the other hand, were rarely attributed to direct royal commands. Even important royal temples such as Somanath or Rudramahālaya in Patan do not carry surviving inscriptions identifying the ruler as the instigator of the construction.[47] In most cases, it was local merchants or courtiers who built or renovated religious structures, hoping to earn favour in the eyes of the rulers. In the case of Islamic

[43] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.680.
[44] There are some traces of sultanate domestic architecture in Champaner and Ahmadabad, as also garden pavilions and fountains, but these have not been studied systematically. See R.N. Mehta, *Champaner* (Baroda: MS University, 1964). See also section on 'Urban settlement in the hinterland' below.
[45] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.1436, Mehta, *Champaner*, p.xi.
[46] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.1234.
[47] There are often genealogies or praises of the king in the inscriptions built by subordinates. The Thepavāpī stepwell inscription of 1328 has a genealogy of the Cuḍāsamās as well as that of the builders, the Mehars or Mers of Talaja. D.B. Diskalkar, *Inscriptions of Kathiawad* (Poona: reprinted from New Indian Antiquary, 1938-41), no.27.

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structures, while there are examples of mosques being constructed on the orders of a ruler, accompanying inscriptions usually mention that the actual execution was carried out by a courtier.[48]

For Muslim donors, the building of a mosque invariably brought religious merit as it denoted exceptional piety and enabled the local community to congregate. The merit that would accrue to the builder was usually indicated by a Qurʿānic verse. For conquerors, the building of a mosque signalled the establishment of Muslim rule in infidel territory. Although several mosques built in the wake of conquest employed the raw materials of demolished temples, very few accompanying inscriptions take note of such destruction. One exception is an inscription of 1505 from Amod which records the construction of a mosque on the site of a temple by Khalīl Khān, the future Muẓaffar II.[49] However, as most religious constructions, Hindu, Jaina or Muslim, were built by highly skilled local architects and builders, there is a distinct similarity in architectural styles.

Certain mosque inscriptions from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are bilingual, i.e., in Arabic or Persian as well as Sanskrit or Gujarati. Bilingual inscriptions would suggest that the information in the text was intended to reach both Muslim and non-Muslim elites. The most famous are the twin Veraval inscriptions of 1264 in Arabic and Sanskrit.[50] These texts state that a Hormuz ship-owner named Nūr al-Dīn Fīrūz bought a piece of land outside the town of Somanath with the consent of its *Pancakula* or town committee, built a mosque on the land and made donations for its maintenance.

Another bilingual inscription – in Persian and Sanskrit – is dated 1323 and is from Petlad, referring to the construction of a well for public use by Ismāʿīl b. ʿUthmān Shīrāzī on land donated by the local governor.[51] In 1340, a stepwell and mosque were built by Mokhā Mahetā, son of Ketā Mahetā the Indian (Hindi) near Baroda. The accompanying inscriptions in Sanskrit and Persian record that the structures were built following an order issued to Malik Muẓaffar, the

[48] The inscriptions in Aḥmad Shāh's mosques in Ahmadabad assign their construction to the king. Desai, *Inscriptions*, nos.6,8. However, many mosque inscriptions merely mention the name of the ruler.
[49] Ibid., no.281, G.S. Gai, ed., *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1974-75* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1990), App. D, no. 13, M. Nazim, "Inscriptions from the Bombay Presidency," *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica, Supplement* (1933-34): p.36, p.XXIa.
[50] The Sanskrit text is discussed in E. Hultszch, "A Grant of Arjunadeva of Gujarat, Dated 1264 AD," *Indian Antiquary* XI (1882): p. 242f, Sircar, *Select Inscriptions II*, pp. 402-08, D.C. Sircar, "Veraval Inscription of Chalukya Vaghela Arjuna, 1264 AD," *Epigraphia Indica* XXXIV, no. 3 (1961-62): p. 141ff, Thapar, "Somanatha." The shorter Arabic text is in *Epigraphia Indica, Arabic and Persian Supplement*, (1961), pp.12-14, IIb.
[51] *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* (1915-16): pp.17-18, no.XIVb, Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.1867, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, P.R. Srinivasan, ed., *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1975-76* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1986), App.D, 114.

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local ruler. The Persian text concludes with Qur'ānic imprecations against whoever abrogated or altered the endowment.[52]

Water structures – primarily stepwells, but also wells and tanks – were almost always built by merchants or courtiers. While one might have assumed that rulers would have some hand in the provision of water in an arid region such as Gujarat, it was in fact subordinates and merchants who were usually responsible. Supplying water along the trade routes or in unirrigated villages was a source of merit and donors were anxious to make clear their generous intentions towards all humanity and animals. Malik Hājī, a courtier, declared in 1460 that his fine garden-house with its lofty porch, four painted walls, fruit-bearing trees and a well and a tank had been constructed for the benefit of all men and animals.[53] Water architecture is thus not entirely distinct from religious architecture – although it served a practical need, it was a merit-generating act of philanthropy. Although most stepwells were associated with Hindu donors and embellished with Hindu iconography, several were built by Muslim donors too. (There are virtually no Jaina sponsors of stepwells). One view has it that from the fourteenth century, with Muslim influence, the religious nature of stepwells changed and from being sacred public buildings they became private retreats for the elite during the hot summer.[54]

Going by extant and published epigraphs, the following table gives some sense of the patterns of patronage to religious structures of different denominations.[55]

[52] *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, (1961-62), App. C, no. 131, *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, (1963-64), App D, no. 85, Desai, *PAEG*, p. 16, Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.2105, G. Yazdani and R. Gyani, *Important Inscriptions from the Baroda State*, vol. II, Shri Pratapasimha Maharaja Rajyabhisheka Granthamala, Memoir No. II (Baroda: 1944), p.1. For a revised reading, see Z.A. Desai, "On Karakhdi bilingual inscription of 1340," *Journal of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery* XII, Ziyaud-Din A. Desai, *Corpus of Persian and Arabic Inscriptions in the Museums of Gujarat*, 1st ed. (Vadodara (Baroda): Director, Department of Museums, Gujarat State, 1985), pp.4-6.

[53] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.17.

[54] Jutta Jain-Neubauer, *The Stepwells of Gujarat in Art Historical Perspective* (Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1981), p.xv.

[55] It should be borne in mind that there are many buildings in existence, especially temples, which have no epigraphs attached to them. These have not been included in the present list. Correspondingly, there are epigraphs that mention buildings no longer in existence, which have been included, on the assumption that those buildings did exist once. The list also includes records of renovations. There are less epigraphs from the thirteenth century than the subsequent ones, partly because of its greater antiquity and partly because Khaljī iconoclasm may have caused evidence to be scattered. It is also necessary to take into account a diversity of recording traditions – the Jainas for example, recorded virtually every renovation and donation to temples and images, which is not usually the case in Hindu temples.

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Table 1: Building patterns in Gujarat[56] from epigraphs, 1200-1509

	Stepwells, wells, tanks	Jaina temples, images	Hindu temples	Mosques/ tombs	Civic architecture
1200-1209	1				
1210-1219		1	1	1	
1220-1229		1	1		
1230-1239		1	2		
1240-1249			1		
1250-1259					
1260-1269		1	2	1	
1270-1279		2	1		
1280-1289				1	
1290-1299		2	2	1	
1300-1309		1	3	1	1
1310-1319	2	1		3	
1320-1329	2			6	
1330-1339	1	1		4	1
1340-1349	1	2		2	1
1350-1359				2	
1360-1369				7	
1370-1379			1	4	
1380-1389	5		2	13	
1390-1399	2	1	2	3	1
1400-1409	3		1	3	4
1410-1419	4		2	8	
1420-1429		1		9	
1430-1439				9	
1440-1449	2		1	6	
1450-1459	1	2		7	3
1460-1469	6	1		8	1
1470-1479	1	2	1	7	
1480-1489	4		1	6	2
1490-1499	4			6	1
1500-1509				5	
Total	**49**	**20**	**24**	**123**	**15**

Until the 1350s, we see endowments to Hindu (largely Śaiva) and Jaina religious structures. From about 1300, coinciding with sultanate political control, there are more endowments to Islamic structures, although some mosques and tombs were built earlier by Muslim merchant families. Of the trends that emerge from this table, the most striking is the rise in the number of stepwells, many of which were built by women and by sultanate officials. As to the Jaina figures, patterns of donation (often of an icon) seem to remain constant throughout the period of our study. Most of

[56] Here Gujarat refers to the territory covered by modern Gujarat, unified only towards the end of our period under Maḥmūd I, c. 1470.

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the Jaina epigraphs record small-scale donations – of an icon or a sum of money – by families. While there was large-scale building in the thirteenth century, this is not reflected in accompanying epigraphs.

The epigraphs of Gujarat show a remarkably large number of women as donors and significant relatives. Women were the sole donors in 19 epigraphs during the period studied here (see below), erecting stepwells, mosques, Jaina images and hero-stones. In 6 other epigraphs (not listed here), they are mentioned by name as donors along with their husbands. Several other epigraphs mention the names of women donors or relatives. There are at least 4 instances of donations to temples or Jaina images made for the spiritual welfare of a female relative, a mother or wife. There are also gravestones of some prominent Muslim women.

It is no accident that several water structures were built with donations made by women, including two by Muslim women (nos.1, 18). Firstly, water sites were often linked to mother-goddess worship and the granting of fertility. Perhaps women were also greater users of these sites, especially stepwells. Secondly, this was a reflection of the economic importance of women in the merchant and pastoralist societies that predominated in Gujarat, whether Hindu or Muslim. Women contributed to other kinds of building too, including several endowments to mosques.[57]

Table 2: Women builders:

	Year	Building	Place	Epigraph	Language
1.	1331	Stepwell[58]	Petlad	This bounty (stepwell) was constructed for public use by the late **Kadbānū** wife of Irānshāh.	Arabic and Persian
2.	1368-69	Mosque[59]	Somanath	The mosque built by **Varū**, daughter of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, widow of Ismāʿīl bin Amīr Dāʾūd Shāh.	Persian and Arabic
3.	1380	Stepwell[60]	Mahuva	Built by **Sahajaladevī**, daughter of Rāṇ whose husband worked for the Cuḍāsamās.	Sanskrit
4.	1385	Stepwell dedicated to Someśa[61]	Somanath Patan	Stepwell and other buildings by **Yamunā**, daughter of a Yādava king Bhīma and his wife Māṇikya-devī and wife of Dharma of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa clan.	Sanskrit
5.	1389	Stepwell[62]	Dhandhusar	Built by **Hānī**, wife of Vaijyanāth, son of Gadādhar, minister to the Cuḍāsamā ruler.	Sanskrit
6.	1397	Jaina image[63]	Parnala	**Bhāvaldevī**, wife of Guhilrāj Pratāpmal had	Sanskrit

[57] M.A. Chaghatai, *Muslim Monuments of Ahmedabad through their Inscriptions* (Poona: Deccan College Research Institute, 1942), p.5.
[58] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.1868.
[59] *Corpus Inscriptionum Bhavanagari: being a selection of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions collected by the Antiquarian Department, Bhavnagar State*, (1889; reprint, Kumar Brothers, New Delhi, 1971), p. 6.
[60] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 40, H.G. Shastri, *Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat*, vol. 4, The Sultanate Period (Bombay: Forbes Gujarati Sabha, 1979), no. 59.
[61] James Burgess and Henry Cousens, *Revised List of Antiquarian Remains in the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay: 1897), p.252.
[62] Ibid., p. 245, Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 48, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 61.

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			(Surendranagar district)	the statue consecrated.	
7.	1401	Pond [64]	Bhuva-timbi (Junagadh district)	**Nāgubāī**, daughter of Bharam of the Bārad caste and his wife Megati, built a pond in the village.	Sanskrit
8.	1418	Stepwell[65]	Khed (north Gujarat)	Construction of a well by **Māyāpurī**, wife of Maliryaka.	Sanskrit
9.	1443	Pāliyā (hero-stone) [66]	Lodhva (Junagadh district)	Records the death in battle of a Vājā warrior Godhā. Installed by his dejected wife **Sāgaman**.	Sanskrit
10.	1446-47	Mosque[67]	Ahmadabad	Construction of the mosque by **Bībī Buddu**, wet-nurse of Malik al-Sharq 'Imād al-mulk	Arabic
11.	1454	Mosque and rauza[68]	Ahmadabad	Jāmi' mosque built by **Makhdūma-i-Jahān**, the sultan's mother, in memory of Bībījī, wife of Sayyid Buddha and mother of the ṣūfī Khondamīr.	Arabic
12.	1461	Mosque[69]	Ahmadabad	Mosque built by a woman named **Barman** (Badi mān)	Arabic and Persian
13.	1462	Stepwell[70]	Jegadva (Surendranagar district)	The queen of Rāṇā Śrī Raṇvīr of the Jhālā clan, **Bāī Ramādevī** had a stepwell built.	Prakrit/ Old Gujarati
14.	1468	Pāliyā (hero-stone)[71]	Jegadva (Surendranagar district)	Records the death of someone (name erased). Set up by **Bāī Kāmelāsat**, **Bāī Kākālā**.	Sanskrit
15.	1475	Digambara Jaina images[72]	Himmatnagar	**Lakhanahārani**, daughter of Hṛṣa offered perpetual obeisance to the image.	Sanskrit
16.	1478	Mosque[73]	Ahmadabad	Construction of a mosque by **Bībī Daulat**, daughter of Shaykh Malik and wife of Khān-i-A'ẓam 'Ādil Khān.	Arabic
17.	1482	Stepwell[74]	Rampura (Surendranagar dt.)	**Rāṇībāī** and **Valhāde**, the wives of Sheth Vīṇā of the Śrīmāla caste constructed a stepwell.	Sanskrit
18.	1499	Stepwell[75]	Asarva (Ahmadabad)	**Bāī Harīr**, a female official of Maḥmūd I, built a stepwell at Asarva	Sanskrit and Persian.
19.	1499	Stepwell[76]	Adalaj (Ahmadabad)	**Rāṇī Ruḍādevī's** stepwell at Adalaj, mentions both her father's and husband's lineages.	Sanskrit, last 3 lines in Gujarati

[63] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 56, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 85.
[64] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 60, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 50. Unusually, this donor cites only her parents. There is no mention of a husband.
[65] K. G. Krishnan, ed., *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1978-79* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1987), App B, no. 67.
[66] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 72, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 52.
[67] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.10, K. G. Krishnan, ed., *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1977-78* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1986), App D, no. 63, p.148.
[68] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.15.
[69] Ibid., no.19.
[70] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 79, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 91-92.
[71] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 81, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 93.
[72] Krishnan, ed., *ARIE 1978-79*, App B, no. 59.
[73] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.25.
[74] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 86.
[75] James Burgess, *Indian Antiquary* IV (1875): vol. 4, pp. 367-68.
[76] Burgess and Cousens, *Rev. List*, pp.301-11, Hariprasad Shastri, *Buddhiprakash* 104 (1955): pp. 19-23.

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While there had been widespread temple-building under the Caulukyas in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there was a decided fall-off in patronage to Hindu temples from the thirteenth century and particularly so from about 1310. In common with many early medieval states, Caulukya temple complexes and those of their imitators were political institutions designed to link the ruler's sovereignty with that of the deity.[77] In the Caulukya case, the deity was usually Śiva in various manifestations and the main royal temples were those at Somanath, Anhilvada Patan and Siddhapur.

However, the link between late-Caulukya rulers and their temples is not so clear in the epigraphic material. The usual pattern of thirteenth-century Hindu epigraphs is not, like the Jaina ones, an assertion by private individuals of specific donations to temples, or having paid for the installation of an icon. They are usually grants made by a subordinate of the ruler of a village or land or income derived thereof to support a temple. For example, the Bharāṇā grant of a well in 1270 was made by two officers of Bharana, (near modern Jamnagar) who were subordinate to Pālha and Sāmantasiṃha, the governors of Saurashtra during the rule of Arjunadeva Vāghelā (r. 1262-74) in Anhilvada.[78] While the line of authority from the local chief to the Caulukya overlord was always cited, the actual grant was not made by the supreme ruler or even in his name but at the local level by local chieftains, governors or subjects. Chattopadhyaya states that 'State formation, among the Rajputs and in general, was inevitably linked with the practice of grants of land to Brahmanas, temples, Buddhist monasteries (*vihāras*) and Brahmanic monasteries (*mathas*).'[79] This linked royal and sacred authority within a reciprocal system of legitimation. However, the grants we encounter in thirteenth-century Gujarat were almost invariably made by subordinates and only exceptionally did they link the ruler with their royal temples.

This suggests that in the thirteenth century, the Vāghelā rulers were not instigating building activity themselves. Local temples and shrines continued to be built and supported, but monumental royal shrine-complexes were already a thing of the past. While the rulers still had

[77] B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Historiography, History and Religious Centers: Early Medieval North India, circa AD 700-1200," in *Gods, Guardians and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, AD 700-1200*, ed. Vishakha N. Desai and Darielle Mason (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1993), p.40. For Caulukya temples, see H. Cousens, *Somanatha and other Medieval Temples in Kathiawad* (Calcutta: 1931), M.A. Dhaky, "Chronology of the Solanki Temples in Gujarat," *Journal of the Madhya Pradesh Itihas Parishad* 3 (1961). The fact that even non-Hindus were aware of the ideological link between king and temple is demonstrated in the Ismā'īlī tradition of the conversion of Siddharāja, in which the *dā'ī* humbles the temple priest and then impresses the ruler. S.C. Misra, *Muslim Communities in Gujarat: Preliminary studies in their history and social organization* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p.10.

[78] D.B. Diskalkar, "Some Unpublished Inscriptions of the Chaulukyas of Gujarat (contd.)," *Poona Orientalist* II, no. 4 (1938): pp.232-33.

[79] Chattopadhyaya, "Religious Centers," p.44.

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ideological links with certain temples, new ones were not being built. This was now a shrinking political sphere.

As the Caulukyas and Vāghelās lost influence over many parts of Gujarat, other chieftains, some of whom were later assimilated into emerging Rajput status hierarchies, consolidated their hold over their territories. However, most of them did not go in for temple-building on a grand scale. What epigraphs we have from regions of withdrawing Caulukya control do not show clear signs of Brahmanism either – they are mostly hero-stones written in local dialect. In fact the vast majority of the Sanskritic grant-recording epigraphs of the thirteenth century continued to invoke the distant Caulukya/Vāghelā overlords in Anhilvada although their actual authority was now only in name.

By the end of the thirteenth century, no new royal temples had been built for a century or more. The new Rajputising pastoralist chieftains had not yet fully adopted the early medieval logic of deriving legitimacy from brahmanas and large temples. Thus when the Turkish invasion backed by carefully targeted attacks on royal temple establishments led to the establishment of sultanate political control by about 1310, the link between royalty and the royal temple was swept away. There was, correspondingly, an abrupt cessation of the Caulukya model of grant-making epigraphs in Sanskrit. Although imitative Śaivism of the Caulukya kind was gradually adopted by the smaller Rajput courts, it was in a rudimentary form. We have little evidence that there were elaborate courtly rituals followed at the Cuḍāsamā court.

Urban settlement in the hinterland

Maḥmūd Begaḍā conducted some of the most spectacular building and settlement activities in Gujarat. In 1470, after the capture of the fort of Junagadh, he founded the city of Mustafabad at the foot of the hill.

> After this victory the Sultan sent to the cities and towns of Gujarat for great sayads and noted wise men and kazis, and officers acquainted with the Muhammadan faith to enforce the laws of Islam, and settled them in Junagadh, and in the towns under it, and he himself remained there, and commenced to populate the town, and to repair the city-walls of Jahan-panah, and built lofty palaces, and ordered his amirs to each of them build a residence for himself.[80]

Soon after this, Maḥmūd, reaching a spot on the banks of the Vatrak where highway robberies often took place, ordered the construction of another city on that spot, which was named Mahmudabad. A stone embankment was built on the river and 'lofty palaces' were

[80] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p. 58.

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erected. After the conquest of Champaner in 1483-84, he built what became his capital for the rest of his reign. Champaner was on a plain rich in wheat, barley, millet, rice, gram, chickpeas, lentils and other pulses. People reared sheep and goats and it had an abundance of fruit.

> The climate of Champaner was very pleasing to the Sultan, and he made it his capital, and built there a large city which was named Muhammadabad, and a lofty mosque was constructed, and the Sultan also erected a fort around Champaner and called it Jahanpanah, and the *amirs*, *vazirs*, merchants and petty traders (*saudagar wa baqqal*), each one, built for himself lofty dwellings.[81]

Thus, provision was made for the Sultan's entire entourage, including his merchants and financiers.

Apart from the strategic construction of forts and bastions at strategic locations, the rapid and large-scale construction carried out across the span of their territories by the orders of the sultans from Aḥmad Shāh to Maḥmūd Begaḍā had the additional purpose of stimulating settlement. Settling is a common theme in the chronicles and connotes clearing land for cultivation, building towns, mosques and gardens, patronising religious figures and cultivating a sedentary, prosperous, civic ambience. From the description of Champaner, it is evident that merchants and traders were encouraged to settle within the central citadel. The presence of the court would further attract the entire network of production and supply, which customarily followed the court around, to settle and populate that location. While an entourage of traders, financiers and suppliers customarily accompanied the sultans even to temporary encampments, the actual construction of a citadel provided the security necessary for them to put down roots, cultivate the surrounding territory, engage in production and activate trade routes. Champaner became an important centre for fine silk weaving and embroidery by the Kaṇbīs, after the court moved there.

Similarly, the sultans encouraged prominent courtiers and religious figures to establish suburbs around Ahmadabad, many of which were named after them (most of these names are still in use). These included Daryā Khān who established the suburb of Daryapur to the north of the citadel and Shaykh Raḥmat Allāh who settled Shaykhpura,[82] Khudāvand Khān 'Ālim who built the southern suburb of Alimpur, 'Imād al-Mulk Asās of Asaspur, Tāj Khān Sālār of Tajpur, Qiwām al-Mulk Sārang of Sarangpur and Hājī Kālū of Kalupur, all of whom 'beautified their lands with gardens and lofty mosques'.[83] Administratively as well, courtiers were usually granted *jāgīr*s in perpetuity, which would encourage them to invest in the long-term prosperity of the

[81] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.137.
[82] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p. 78, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.150.
[83] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, pp. 87-89. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, pp.166-8.

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region. This was unlike the usual Delhi sultanate practice of granting *iqṭā'*s as transferable administrative assignments liable to resumption at any time. Malik 'Abd al-Laṭif Maḥmūd Dāwar al-Mulk was assigned a *jāgīr* near Morvi, which became proverbially prosperous. The Malik in addition acquired a reputation as a healer and after he was killed by a local chieftain, his tomb became a major place of pilgrimage.[84] Malik Ayāz was granted the territory of Diu and was largely responsible for making it an important port and naval centre which eventually supplanted Cambay by the end of the fifteenth century.

The basic architectural patterns of the oldest parts of the towns of Gujarat, including their road systems and wards, did not change much as a result of political fortunes, the influx of migrants or changes of rulers. An important study of settlement patterns in Gujarat by V.S. Pramar found that the wards in the older parts of Ahmadabad or Baroda had been intact for the last 250 years, i.e. since c. 1750 and their foundations dated back to the fifteenth century. The fortified citadel was built for the use of the ruler or administrator and attendants. In Ahmadabad and Patan, the central and most prized parts of the town had been consistently in the occupation of Hindu and Jaina merchants. In Radhanpur and Palanpur, ruled by Muslim nawabs, 'the Hindu areas begin virtually at the citadels ... and stretch into the central parts of the town.'[85] A similar scenario was observed in Surat, Baroda, Kapadvanj, Cambay etc. 'The presence of entrenched Hindu and Jaina merchants in central areas even under Muslim rule would clearly indicate that the former were not merely tolerated but were encouraged to settle, or remain settled, in areas most valuable for commercial purposes and most secure from plunder. The reason is obvious: these merchants were an important source of revenue.'[86]

Pramar found that Hindu citadels, such as those in Saurashtra, were invariably located in the centre of the town, which gave them added security from invasion. Muslim citadels, such as those in Ahmadabad, Baroda, Surat, Radhanpur and Palanpur, were usually to be found on the peripheries of the town. The problem of security was solved by placing the citadel next to a water body: a river in Ahmadabad, the sea at Cambay, or next to artificial lakes as at Baroda or Radhanpur. In some cases, moats were dug to ensure security, as around the fort of Morasa.[87] The

[84] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, pp. 82-84. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, pp.161-3.
[85] V.S. Pramar, "The effects of trade and urbanization on the architecture of Gujarat," in *Studies in Trade and Urbanization in Western India*, ed. V.K. Chavda (Baroda: M.S. University, 1985), p.86.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.12, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.25.

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outer fortification was the city wall enclosing the entire civic population, as at Ahmadabad and Baroda. This again was to defend the large commercial civilian population.[88]

As the city wall imposed limitations on horizontal expansion, there was no option but to grow vertically. Thus, multi-storied buildings were constructed which required complex structural solutions. In Gujarat, timber framing was used, with brick walls, 'in such a manner that the woodwork held the walls together as a kind of horizontal and vertical bracing.'[89] Although Gujarat was a region notably lacking in good structural timber, superior teak was imported by sea for the purpose. Thus, several aspects of the profile of urban Gujarat, 'namely a high level of urbanization, numerous fortified towns, and a multi-storied architecture in wood, ... are directly related to the trade and commerce for which Gujarat was famous.'[90] The *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī* bears out the fact that teak was used for the ceilings and pillars of houses. Important buildings were then covered with lime, quarried from near Idar. This was used 'in stucco work; for the walls or terraces of buildings; and for fine edifices, pleasurehouses and mausoleums.... The mausoleums of the Mohammedan saints, the temples of the Hindus, and other public works... are erected with this lime; as are also numerous canals, water reservoirs, wells and other like buildings.'[91]

Such buildings were already common in fourteenth century Cambay, where Baṭṭūṭa was struck by the 'fine mansions and magnificent buildings' and the 'excellence of its construction and the architecture' and ascribed it to the settling of foreign merchants. 'Among the grand buildings of the city is the house of Sharīf as-Sāmirī... I have never seen stronger pieces of timber than those used in this house. Its gate is like the gate of a town, and adjacent to the house is a large mosque which is named after as- Sāmirī.'[92] Varthema (1508) found Cambay a walled town and Barbosa, a few years later, found 'many fair houses, very lofty, with windows and roofed with tiles in our manner, well laid out with streets and fine open places, and great buildings of stone and mortar.'[93]

On Ahmadabad, Barbosa said:

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[88] Pramar, "Architecture," p. 87.
[89] Pramar suggests that the construction technique was borrowed from an almost identical procedure used in West Asia. Ibid., p.87.
[90] Ibid., p. 87.
[91] Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi: Khatima*, trans. M.F. Lokhandwala, Gaekwad's Oriental Series (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1965), p.106.
[92] Battuta, *Rehla*, pp.172-3.
[93] Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, trans. Mansel Longworth Dames, 2 vols., vol. I, *including the coasts of East Africa, Arabia, Persia, and Western India as far as the kingdom of Vijaynagar* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1918-21; reprint, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 1989), pp. 140-1.

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> In the inland country going forward from this city of Champanel there is another much greater than it, called Andava, in which the kings of this kingdom held their courts of old, inasmuch as it is very rich. Both of these towns are girt with strong walls and have fine stone and mortar houses roofed in our fashion. They have large courtyards in which there are tanks and wells of sweet water. ... In this city and in many other inland towns the King of Cambaya keeps his Governors and Collectors of Revenue.[94]

Significantly, the Gujarat towns had very few buildings designed for commercial use. There are hardly any remains of markets, warehouses, courts, or other institutional buildings. There were caste buildings and occasionally *sarāī*s, although these were not common. In the texts as well, there are descriptions of city walls, forts, palaces, colleges for scholars, *sarāī*s for travellers and substantial residences for *amīr*s and merchants, but hardly any mentions of shops or civic buildings. As commerce was heavily dependent upon the personal patronage of the rulers and their courtiers who were very mobile, traders often travelled with them. Transactions were usually carried out in domestic spaces: traders carried their wares to the residences of their patrons. Most large houses had *diwānkhānu*s for public audiences and other public activities. As civic disturbances were common, it was risky to display costly wares in the open market: the death of a ruler or the fall from favour of a courtier could lead to looting and plunder by local mobs.[95] Public markets were usually temporary structures where merchants and hawkers set up stalls that could be quickly taken down.

One history of the Kaṇbīs says that they began to come to the city to engage in trade, manufacture and to take jobs after the establishment of Ahmadabad in 1413.[96] Large settlements of Kaṇbīs were settled in Unjha, Adalaj, Asarva, Idar and Champaner. Those of Champaner were skilled in silk and gold weaving, dyeing and were traders. After the fall of Champaner to Maḥmūd Begaḍā, they also moved to Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat and Valsad. At this time the Levā Kaṇbīs were entering the central parts of Kheda district, then controlled by Mehwāsīs, as also Charotar, Kanam, Vakal and Kacch. The Levā Kaṇbīs settled around Cambay for ease in trade.

Adalaj at the end of the fourteenth century was an important town. Although Thatta port was important for some of the Sind and Kacch trade, most goods passed through Adalaj on their way to Cambay. Various groups from north Gujarat including Śrīmālī brahmanas, traders such as the Moḍh *vāṇiā*s, Kaṇbīs from the Patan region, artisans and pastoralists had settled there. The

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[94] Ibid., p. 125.
[95] Pramar, "Architecture," pp.88-89.
[96] Patel, *Vadnagara Kanbis*, p.11.

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Modh *vāṇiās* were from Modhera, but migrated to Adalaj and Gogha near Cambay at the time of 'Alā' al-Dīn's invasion.[97]

Adalaj was ruled by the Vāghelās, descendants of the erstwhile rulers and was very prosperous, with reportedly 700 places for selling ghee and about 2000 pack bullocks. Adalaj was a collecting point on the way to the port of Cambay or Nagara. The pastoralists brought grain, cloth, leather, opium and dry fruit from north India with their cattle and camels. A legend from the *Kaumārikā-khaṇḍa*, a part of the Māheśvara-khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa, has a legend that refers to the annual migration of pastoralist groups from Saurashtra and Kacch.[98] The Modh *vāṇiās* who were middlemen and brokers, collected the goods and sent them on to Cambay and Nagara. Bhāṭs, Cāraṇs and Bāroṭs would go along with the caravans to safeguard them. The Kaṇbīs of the region, also known as Pāṭīdārs or Paṭels, farmed their lands in the monsoon and in the winter and summer took cartloads to Cambay. Barbosa also reported that there were men 'of low degree who act as messengers and go safely everywhere without molestation from any, even during war or from highwaymen; these men they call *Pateles.*'[99] When Cambay began to silt up, from the early fifteenth century, Adalaj also began to decline and was replaced by the newly established Ahmadabad.

Cambay and the coast

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who visited Cambay in the fourteenth century, found it a place of architectural glory where foreign merchants vied with each other to build beautiful mosques and mansions. He also visited Gandhar, Kavi, Piram and Ghogha where Muslims were settled. A fort was built in Cambay by the king for protection against the pirates of Kish, although, in the fourteenth century, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa reported that the city had no wall around it.[100] It had a cosmopolitan population. A Genoese merchant found 'Moorish merchants of Alexandria and Damascus' in Cambay at the end of the fifteenth century.[101] In the early sixteenth century, Barbosa remarked of Cambay: '... in the city dwell substantial merchants and men of great fortune, both Moors and Heathen. There are

[97] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, pp. 74-5.
[98] R.N. Mehta and S.G. Kantawala, "Two legends from the Skanda Purana - a Study," *Purana* (1973): pp. 124-132. According to another view, the *Kaumārikā Khaṇḍa* belongs, on internal evidence, to a period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. R.N. Mehta, "Kaumarika Khanda - A Study," *Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda* 14 (1965): p.45.
[99] Barbosa, *Book*, vol. I, p.117.
[100] At the time of the rebellion of the Afghan, Qāẓī Jalāl, the merchant Shams al-Dīn and the shipowner Iliyās, both eminent citizens, began to make a trench around the town to defend themselves against the rebel. Battuta, *Rehla*, p.173.
[101] R.H. Major, ed., *India in the Fifteenth Century, Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India in the Century Preceding the Portuguese Discovery of the Cape of Good Hope; from Latin, Persian, Russian and Italian Sources* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1857), p.46.

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also many craftsmen of mechanic trades in cunning work of many kinds, as in Flanders; and everything good cheap.'[102]

Cambay was the outlet for the trade from Patan and, by the fourteenth century, was the most important port in Gujarat. It was generally regarded as a safe harbour for merchants, although the seas around it were hazardous due to pirates and difficult sailing conditions. According to Marco Polo, Cambay was safe but the Arabian sea was overrun by Kacch and Somanath pirates. While Arab trade was harassed by Jats, Meds, Rajputs, Bāriās and Kurks as far as Socotra, there was peace in Cambay. Athanasius Nikitin, (1468-74) found that 'The sea is infested with pirates, all of whom are Kofars, neither Christians nor Mussulmans; they pray to stone idols and know not Christ.'[103] The bores at the mouth of the Gulf of Cambay also required expert seamanship. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa found that the tides in the Cambay Gulf rose and fell so that travellers had to go in small boats or by land from Cambay to Gandhar. They had to anchor in Gogha and go in smaller boats to Cambay, whence their goods were carried to Asaval.[104]

Indian merchants, it may be noted, did little to protect themselves from the notorious pirates of the coast. Unlike Chinese and Arab ships, Indian traders did not travel in convoys and references to armaments aboard ship are few.[105] This apparent invulnerability to the pirates leads to the suspicion that the arrangement with them must have been monetary. Merchants certainly had links with pirates. A story of the thirteenth century merchant Jagaḍū, in a text by a sixteenth-century Jaina author Śubhaśīlagaṇi, relates that coastal pirates once offered him a shipload of beeswax that had fallen into their hands. All the wax bricks were found to contain gold and thus Jagaḍū became richer by a further ten million *ṭankā*s.[106] On land, forest communities were at times induced to police lonely routes or were prevented from plundering by permitting them to levy tolls for passing through their territories.[107] It is not unlikely that pirates had similar arrangements with merchants on shore, in order to restrict the activities of outsiders.

The colonies of foreign merchants in Cambay administered their own affairs and dealt with representatives of the hinterland government, usually a Jaina merchant or one of the settlers.

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[102] Barbosa, *Book*, vol.I, p. 132.
[103] 'The Travels of Athanasius Nikitin of Twer' in Major, ed., *India*, p. 11.
[104] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.114.
[105] Jain, *Trade*, p.89.
[106] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.23.
[107] See Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century Central India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.112.

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In the late fifteenth century, Hieronimo di Santo Stefano remarked that the chief of Cambay 'is a Mahometan, and a great lord'.[108]

The coastal towns saw a certain indigenisation among the foreign merchants. A thirteenth-century bilingual inscription (in Sanskrit and Arabic) from Somanath demonstrates the close dealings that a trader-captain from Hormuz, Nākhuda Nūr al-Dīn Fīrūz, had with the local notables. The mosque that he endowed would be maintained by local Muslim communities which included sailors, captains, oilpressers and limeworkers or masons.[109] By this time, evidently, Muslims numbered not just immigrant or itinerant merchants but indigenous groups who, as in the case of the *ghāncika*s or oilpressers, even had their own *khāṭib*, or leader of the prayers. This is very significant, as it shows the earliest communities that must have converted to Islam in the region. The conversion to Islam of many of the coastal fishing and ship-building communities of Gujarat could date to this period. By the thirteenth century, Muslim traders were settling and trading even in the hinterland – as graves in Junagadh and Anhilvada show.[110] A thirteenth-century Jaina merchant of Bhadreshvar in Kacch certainly had dealings with settler merchants, to the extent of making a donation towards a mosque for the local Ismā'īlīs.

Cambay was the place from where people embarked on the pilgrimage to Mecca in the fourteenth century. The *Kīrtikaumudī* mentions that the Delhi sultan's mother or alternatively, his religious adviser, sailed out from Cambay. The minister Vastupāla ordered his men to plunder the vessel and then had the men arrested and the property restored. The grateful travellers arranged for a friendly treaty between the Vāghelā king and the sultan.[111] Cambay, by the middle of the fourteenth century when Baṭṭūṭa visited it, was already subject to the difficulties of siltation and the uncertainties of the bore in the Gulf. Only small boats could come into Cambay at low tide. However, it remained important until the end of the fifteenth century when there were clear signs that it was being replaced as the chief port of the region by Diu, where the Portuguese were desperate to get a foothold. With the Portuguese firmly established in Diu, the next great port used by indigenous traders was Surat.

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[108] Major, ed., *India*, p.46.
[109] Z.A. Desai, "Muslims in the 13th century Gujarat, as known from Arabic inscriptions," *Journal of the Oriental Institute* 10, no. 4 (1960): pp. 353-364, Sircar, "Veraval Inscription of Chalukya Vaghela Arjuna, 1264 AD," pp. 121-150.
[110] Desai, "13th century," p. 356, Shokoohy, Bayani-Wolpert, and Shokoohy, *Bhadresvar*, p.55.
[111] Kathavate, *Kirtikaumudi of Somesvara*, pp.xxiv-xxv.

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Interdependence of merchants and the state

The attractions of the prosperity of Gujarat were considerable. A Jaina text tells of the migration into Gujarat of 18,000 people from the town of Śrīmāla in C.E. 953. The *Śrīmāla Purāṇa* mentions that *śrī* or prosperity left Śrīmāla for Anhilvada in 1146.[112] Major merchants operated through far-flung networks. Apart from extensive settlements overseas, they had contacts in many parts of the Indian subcontinent. The merchant who persuaded Alp Khān to permit the renovation of the Shatrunjaya Jaina temples in 1315, Samrā Śāh, had a brother in Deogir. Other important merchants were settled in Cambay, such as Jesal of the Ukeśavaṃśa who built the Stambhana-Pārśvanātha temple there in 1309-10. The *Vimala-prabandha* (VS 1568) relates the traditional origin of the Śrīmālī, Osvāl and Porvāḍ *vāṇiās* and their entry into Gujarat from the twelfth century.[113]

The trade of Cambay had been strongly connected with the prosperity of the Caulukya kingdom. The Caulukyas by the time of Bhīmadeva I had achieved control of the trade route between Patan and Cambay. Bhīmadeva's successor Karṇa had to send a force against the Kolīs of Asaval who menaced the trade route. He then built Karṇāvatī, a new town on the site of Asaval.[114] Evidently the trade route was vital to the survival of Caulukya power. By the twelfth century, Patan had become a large town. The *Kumārapāla carita* says that it had a population of 500,000, there were 84 marts and export-import duties were 100,000 *ṭankās* a day.[115]

It was evidently crucial for the governors to safeguard merchants and trade routes. 'Alā' al-Dīn's first governor, Alp Khān actively conciliated the prosperous Jaina merchant community by permitting Samrā Śāh to reconstruct a temple destroyed in the invasion and even contributing towards the renovation.[116] Another merchant Śāh Jesal was also permitted to build a temple and hospital at Cambay in 1309-10.[117] Gravestones of Muslim merchants in Cambay also attest to the benevolent rule of Alp Khān.[118] Meanwhile, other *amīran-i-ṣadah* (commanders of a hundred horse) or Afghan, Turkish or north Indian adventurers moved into strategic locations in Gujarat and established ties with the prosperous Arab and Persian Gulf merchants who lived and traded in

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[112] R.C. Parikh and R.B. Athavale, eds., *Kavyanusasana*, 2 vols., vol. II, Part 1 (Bombay: 1938), p. cii.
[113] Manilal Bakorbhai Vyas, ed., *Vimalaprabandha of Muni Lāvaṇyasamaya* (1914).
[114] A.S. Altekar, "A History of the Important Ancient Towns in Gujarat and Kathiawad," *Indian Antiquary* LIII and LIV (1924-25): p. 47.
[115] Ksantivijaya Gani, ed., *Kumarapalacarita-Mahakavya of Jayasimha Suri* (Bombay: 1926), p. 14.
[116] 'Samrā-rasu' in C.D. Dalal, ed., *Prācīna Gurjara Kāvya-Sangraha*, vol. I, Gaekwad's Oriental Series No.13 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1978), pp. 27-38.
[117] Appendix VIII, 'Inscription of the reign of Alapkhan in the temple of Stambhana Parsvanatha in Cambay' in Ibid., p. 152, Muni Jinavijayaji, *Prachina Jaina Lekha Sangraha: A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, 2 vols., vol. 2, p. 447.
[118] Desai, *PAEG*, p.13.

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Cambay. Others formed links with local chieftains or merchants – the allies of the amīrs of Baroda in the first challenge to Aḥmad Shāh included Jīvandās and Prāgdās Khatrī.[119] Even the governors sometimes incorporated prominent merchants into the administrative structure or granted them honorific titles. Three inscriptions in Cambay provide information on the merchant Zakī al-Daulat wa'l-Dīn 'Umar b. Aḥmad, entitled Malik Parvīz al-Kazarunī, who was granted the *iqṭā'* of Cambay and the title 'Prince among princes of the east and the ministers, prince among princes of the merchants' by Muḥammad b. Tughluq.[120] Another Cambay merchant, Najm al-Dīn of Jilan was appointed commandant of the city by Muḥammad b. Tughluq.[121]

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Patan (Anhilvada in the Gujarati records and Nahrwāla in the Persian ones) was one of the most prominent manufacturing centres in Gujarat and by extension, in north-west India and Cambay, the most prominent seaport. In fact, the whole of Gujarat was customarily known to foreign visitors and traders as Cambay. Control of the Patan-Cambay belt thus ensured its rulers a share in the proceeds of arguably the most prosperous zone of trade and manufacture in the lands bounding the Arabian Sea. In addition, rulers in this region were assured access to a variety of goods and resources that would be hard to find in other regions. Merchants were eager to deal with local lords and potentates and networks for the passage of goods and information were well organised and had been at least since the rule of the Caulukyas. In general, it was in everyone's interest to preserve a state of peace and order for the successful continuance of trade. Of course, there were regular disruptions to peace in the form of invasions and local armed struggles, but these were usually succeeded by a rapid resumption of normal trade. In many cases, 'normal trade' continued even alongside political upheaval.

A remarkable feature of the region and period was the stability of the currency, regardless of political circumstances. This also contradicts M.N. Pearson's conclusions that the government had little contact with trade and traders.[122] In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Caulukya silver alloy coins – *poruṭṭha drammas* or later, *vīsalaprīya* and *bhīmaprīya drammas* – were struck at the Śrīmāla mint in southern Rajasthan.[123] These have been identified with the *gadhaiya* currency found in large quantities in central and western India. They had a wide circulation in Malwa, Konkan, Sind, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and even Afghanistan, suggesting that hinterland produce was completely dependent upon the Gujarat trade.[124] From 1064-1241, the Caulukya coins had a

[119] Misra and Rahman, eds., *MS*, p.30.
[120] Desai, *PAEG*, p. 16, fn. 37.
[121] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.173.
[122] Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers*, pp. 60-64.
[123] Deyell, *Living without Silver*, p. 114.
[124] Ibid., p. 125.

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stable precious metal content. From the mid-thirteenth century, with much of Gujarat's commercial hinterland, i.e., Sind and Rajasthan, passing into Turkish hands, there was chronic debasement of the currency, which could have been related to silver shortage due to the cutting off of silver supply from the north-west, inflation or loss of trade revenues. From the time of Vīsaladeva Vāghelā, coins were increasingly devalued by reducing the silver content and in this debased form, the circulation of the *gadhaiya* shrank to the modern Kheda district and parts of the eastern Gujarat hinterland. It is suggested, therefore, that the later Vāghelās' 'economic horizons' thus became severely limited. 'It cannot be a coincidence that kingdoms that were most successful in maintaining the net precious metal content of their coins, were the most closely involved in trade.... Such universal acceptability (of the *gadhaiya*) was conditional upon the preservation of the silver standard, and in fact for the better part of two centuries the net silver content of the gadhaiya was static.... When stable billon coinage accepted in international trade began to slip in its actual or intrinsic value, its area of circulation contracted.'[125]

After the Turkish invasion of Gujarat, the Delhi currency, the silver *ṭankā*, was immediately introduced, although it is likely that Śrīmāla continued to be an important mint. The mint master of the Delhi sultans (in 1318) was Ṭhakkura Pheru, a Jaina of the Śrīmāla clan.[126] The movement outwards of Gujarati money was balanced by the import of foreign specie and bullion into Gujarat in the form of payment, which enabled Gujarat to maintain a healthy currency. While the state could influence currency circulation in the administration and the military, non-governmental financial institutions, bankers and bullion dealers were a necessary part of the financial system. In Gujarat, such activities were dominated by the Jainas. The Delhi *ṭankā* was replaced by the local Gujarat coinage, the *maḥmūdī*, which again became one of the most stable and widely accepted currencies from the late fifteenth century.

Links between the merchant magnates and inland political authority continued to grow through the fourteenth century. The sultans of Gujarat, and the Delhi sultans before them, invested in boats and possessed, by the late fifteenth century, some of the largest vessels then plying in the Arabian Sea. Muḥammad bin Tughluq fought a battle, much celebrated in bardic sources, against Mokhḍājī Gohil, a chieftain who had snatched control of the strategic island of Piram at the mouth of the Gulf of Cambay, from where he harried and taxed shipping.[127] There is

[125] Ibid., pp. 240-1.
[126] Ibid, G.H. Khare, "Dravyapariksha of Thakkura Pheru - A Study," *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* XXVIII (1966): p. 25.
[127] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, pp. 307-309.

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evidence that he requisitioned boats for the invasion of Sind in 1350-51.[128] Tughluq came rushing to Gujarat and spent his last years and resources there because it was necessary to safeguard Gujarat and its trade from the *ṣadah amīrs* and pirates. By 1361, his successor Fīrūz was back in Gujarat and Kacch to safeguard the local trade routes from the rebellious *amīrs* and Cambay from the pirates.

Prior to the arrival in Gujarat of Ẓafar Khān, the last governor sent out by the Delhi sultans, the previous governor had been based in Cambay and seemed to have taken full advantage of the commercial vitality of the port for his own advantage. An inscription of 1361 relates that Mufarrih Sulṭānī, was deputy *muqṭa'* of the city of Khambhāt.[129] At this time, Shams al-Dīn Damaghāni was the *nā'ib* of the province, appointed over the objections of the powerful Afghan landholders of Gujarat, the *amīran-i-ṣadah*. After Damaghāni was killed by the disgruntled Afghan warlords, Mufarrih Sulṭānī, now entitled Farḥat al-Mulk, was appointed *nā'ib* in his stead. By 1380 Farḥat al-Mulk was being referred to as the *muqṭa'* of the *iqṭā'* of Khambhāt (Cambay) and the *Ra'īs al-Mamālik* (chief of the kingdom).[130] Until the advent of Ẓafar Khān in 1391, Mufarrih Sulṭānī had a span of 30 years in which to consolidate his local ties in and around Cambay and evidently enjoyed the support of the *ṣadah amīrs*.[131]

It is hardly true that the sultans were indifferent to the encouragement of trade and manufacture, or that they did nothing to promote it.[132] It was through the fifteenth century that large parts of Gujarat were cleared, settled and urbanised and a new set of relationships of patronage set up between merchants and the new elites. The polity presided over by the sultans proved to be the one of the greatest spurs to the local and international trade of Gujarat.

It was in the interest of the sultans not to antagonise the merchants and vice versa. Throughout this period, merchants, cultivating and manufacturing classes rearranged themselves around the new set of patrons. Even pirates and robber bands accommodated themselves to the new networks. Merchants also needed to maintain good links with the sultans and their courtiers who were vital patrons for their products and consumed large quantities of luxury goods. On the eve of a decisive battle for the fort of Junagadh, Maḥmūd Begaḍā distributed among his soldiers 'fifty millions of ready money in gold', gold-handled Egyptian, Yemeni, Maghrebi, Khurasani and Dailamani swords, Ahmadabad swords with silver hilts, daggers, and Arabian and Turkish

[128] Digby, "Muhammad bin Tughluq's Last Years in Kathiavad and his Invasions of Thattha," p. 86.
[129] Desai, *PAEG*, p. 17.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Yahya bin Ahmad bin 'Abd allah Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, trans. H. Beveridge (1990; reprint, repr. Delhi), pp.145-6.
[132] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p. 69.

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horses with golden trappings. He also permitted his soldiers to ravage the 'country of Sorath' as a result of which 'countless plunder fell into their hands'.[133] Merchant princes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries seemed also to be able to bankroll the activities of warlords and chieftains. Similarly, traders were heavily dependent upon the patronage of courtiers and rulers and could expect major profits.

> As the giving of presents has become an unfailing practice with the people (foreign visitors, travellers, officials), the merchants in Sind and Hind advance a loan of thousands of dinars to every new-comer intending to visit the Sultan; and they provide him with all that he needs for the purpose of presents to the king or for his personal use in the form of riding animals, camels and goods. They even render monetary and personal services to such persons and wait on them like attendants. When these persons reach the Sultan, he gives them magnificent gifts with which they pay off their debts and honour pledges. So the trade of the merchants thrives and they make enormous profits.[134]

While the example above was based on north Indian practice, it is likely that similar conventions obtained in Gujarat too. The northern trade, especially the militarily vital trade in horses was very important to the sultans. When a party of merchants with four hundred Iraqi and Turkish horses were seized by the Raja of Sirohi, Maḥmūd Begaḍā compensated them for their loss from the imperial treasury.[135]

Lands were cleared and grants made under the sultans to ensure agricultural production, particularly of cash crops. Many communities, including artisans and itinerant or carrier communities, engaged in agriculture for part of the year. For example, the Kaṇbīs of the region of Adalaj are reported to have cultivated one crop in the monsoon and spent the rest of the year carrying goods brought to Adalaj by western pastoralists, to the great port of Cambay.[136] Cultivation in Gujarat, except perhaps for subsistence food products, consisted largely of cash crops, especially cotton and indigo.

Technologically proficient groups, such as weavers, dyers, printers and leatherworkers were often given incentives and tended to migrate to areas where they could be assured of security to work. Thus, providing secure urban environments for the pursual of trade and manufacture was one of the most important priorities for any local authority and the sultans were no exception. They depended crucially on the smooth continuance of trade and in fact, most of their campaigns were not intended to disrupt local trade but to safeguard and fully exploit it.

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[133] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, pp. 54-55, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.115.
[134] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.5.
[135] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p. 72, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.143.
[136] Patel, *Vadnagara Kanbis*, p.18.

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The sultans also invested in the safeguarding of the coastal trade. Nicolò Conti who visited Cambay in Aḥmad Shāh's reign said that Cambay shared in equipping the fleet of the Gujarat kingdom and that Aḥmad Shāh used his fleet against the Bahmanis.[137] Later, Maḥmūd Begaḍā also conducted several naval campaigns. In 1508, he defeated the Portuguese at Chaul. Nikitin (1468-74) said that the sea was infested with pirates but the rulers of Gujarat paid much attention to naval matters and keeping the navigation channels into Cambay clear of silt, at a high cost. The sultan of Gujarat was called the Lord of the Sea and had an efficient navy. The Sangars of Kacch and Navanagar were known for their skill in ship-building during the sultanate.[138] Aḥmad Shāh is mentioned as having sent 17 vessels to recover the island of Bombay and Salsette that had been seized by the Bahmani kingdom in 1429.[139] Maḥmūd was able to call up boats from his ports for an expedition to finish off the pirates of the Dvaraka region and made them 'chase and capture the vessels of the enemy'.[140] Soon after, he sent out vessels to punish Malabar pirates who had been harassing the ports of Gujarat.[141] He was thus able to secure boats even away from the areas of direct influence. Incidentally, Rā Māṇḍalik of Junagadh also made a sea expedition and was obviously able to call up some naval power when he needed to.

Of course, the interest in naval power increased over time. In 1490, Bahādur Gīlānī from the Deccan, 'having collected many ships was committing piracies on the Gujarat coast and ... fear of his depredations had paralyzed the trade of the ports of Gujarat.'[142] The sultan sent a land expedition as well as 'three hundred boats with well-armed men furnished with both cannons and muskets' against him. In 1507-8, there was the famous naval battle in which the flotilla commanded by Malik Ayāz, assisted by boats sent by the last Māmluk sultan of Egypt and the Ottoman governor of Bahrayn, defeated the Portuguese – their only defeat in Indian waters. The Gujarat kingdom under Begaḍā eventually had under its control 84 ports. When in 1535 Humayun secured Bahādur Shāh's jewelled belt, he declared that 'These are the trappings of the Lord of the Sea'.[143] 'At this time appears a State List of foreign *bandars* which paid tribute, which was probably a cess or ship-tax paid by the Gujarat traders with Java, in return for the protection of the Royal Navy.[144]

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[137] Major, ed., *India*, p.28.
[138] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p. xiv.
[139] Ibid., p. 75.
[140] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p. 62, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.130.
[141] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.63. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.131.
[142] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.73. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.144.
[143] E.C. Bayley, *Local Muhammadan Dynasties of Gujarat* (1886; reprint, New Delhi, 1970), p. 386.
[144] Khan, *MA Supplement, trans.*, p.131.

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By the second half of the fifteenth century, the port of Cambay was silting up at the head of the gulf. The harbour had ceased to be serviceable for large ships. Although Begaḍā kept the navigational channels open at high cost, but navigation was running into difficulties. By the first years of the sixteenth century, Diu was becoming the great port of Gujarat.[145]

[145] Janaki, *Commerce*, p.21.

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2003 -State and Society in Gujarat c 1200-1500 (1005)

Chapter 3 **Pastoralism, trade and settlement in Saurashtra and Kacch, c.1200-1500**

Before the great earthquake of Kacch in 1819, the Saurashtra peninsula was divided from the mainland of Gujarat by a body of water that proceeded from the Little Rann of Kacch to the Gulf of Cambay.[1] Although the water was shallow in parts and could be forded in the dry season, the peninsula was effectively a separate physical entity for part of the year. Kacch was (and is) another physical region altogether, rendered difficult of access by wide tracts of desert and salt marsh. Consequently, trade and politics in Saurashtra and Kacch functioned in a different physical environment from eastern Gujarat.

As described in Chapter 1, Saurashtra and Kacch were dominated by a pastoralist political system with chieftains fighting over land, resources and livestock. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were marked by large-scale immigration of pastoralist groups into the Saurashtra peninsula and Kacch from the north and north-west. With uncertain rainfall and patchy agriculture, the region west of the Sabarmati river was quite different from urbanised, prosperous eastern Gujarat. Groups struggled against each other to carve out territories, exploit pilgrim traffic to shrines such as Somanath and Dvaraka and tax the trade to and from the numerous ports of the region. This struggle resulted in a political order with many similarities to those of neighbouring Rajasthan and Sind. By the fifteenth century, many of these groups had sedentarised and their loosely-formulated pastoralist kinship organisation began to give way to small state formations, given genealogical legitimation by bardic communities. As some of the more successful pastoralists began to claim Rajput status and set up courts, ritual functions began to be taken on by immigrant brahmanas in a Sanskritic idiom. Concurrently, the more successful groups began to shed aspects of their pastoralist past, including ambiguous religious identities and affiliations to 'heterodox' varieties of Islam, in favour of a constructed Sanskritic legitimation.

Clans and groups

Many of the important clans of Gujarat have a tradition of having migrated from elsewhere and of having moved from site to site before they finally settled down. In the fourteenth century, the lands immediately west of the river Sabarmati were held by the Vāghelās, an off-shoot of the same clan that had been ousted from Patan by the generals of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī at the end of the thirteenth century. They controlled a larger region that is now called Jhalavad as well as the Bhal,

[1] See Chapter 1.

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stretching from Patan almost to the Gulf of Cambay. The Vāghelās functioned as virtual overlords in much of this area, submitting only to the authority of the Delhi governors at Patan and then to the sultans at Ahmadabad. In the thirteenth century, they had granted a part of their lands, the '*chovīsīs*' or 24 villages of Than, Kandola and Chotila, to a branch of the Parmārs in return for suppressing the Bhīl chieftain Āso.[2]

In the late thirteenth century, the region of Kanthkot in eastern Kacch was controlled by the Jhālās.[3] Being driven out of there, they sought the protection of the Caulukyas of Anhilvada and were granted the territory now known as Jhalavad, between the lesser Rann of Kacch and the Gulf of Cambay.

The Kāṭhīs, who eventually gave their name to the region of Kathiavad, are mentioned as being in the service of the Cuḍāsamās in the eleventh century.[4] Formerly vassals of the Sūmrās of Sind, they had to flee Sind and take refuge with the Vāḷā chief in Saurashtra. The Kāṭhīs were evidently outcastes at this period, since the Vāḷā chief is said to have lost caste after eating with them and been subsequently ousted from the kingship by his brothers. The Vāḷā chieftain then cast in his lot with the Kāṭhīs and, with them, conquered several regions, including the Than-Chotila area, from the Soḍhās. Sons of the Kāṭhī-Vāḷā alliance were the founders of three Kāṭhī tribes named after them.[5] They also intermarried with local clans such as the Dhāndhal Rāṭhoḍs and Jhālās. They had a reputation as good fighters and as the best cattle rustlers available. They were also skilled horse breeders whose horses were among the hardiest bred in India. They evidently lent themselves out as military servants and did not subsequently acquire a high status as Rajputs. They 'exemplify, with their martial tradition, the continuum between warrior and robber as well as that between landlord and peasant.'[6]

The sun-worshipping Kāṭhīs were also located in Kacch in the fifteenth century where they founded the kingdom of Pavārgaḍh near Bhuj after the last of them were driven out of Sind by the Sammā Jām Abdā.[7] One tradition of their origin has it they were brought to Gujarat by the mythical hero of the Mahabharata, Karṇa, since they were the best cattle lifters in the world.[8] They were driven out of Kacch by the Jāḍejās and subsequently moved to the region of Than.

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[2] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p.283.
[3] Ibid., p. 229.According to Wilberforce-Bell, the date for this event was c. 1055. Wilberforce-Bell, *Kathiawad*, p. 66.
[4] Wilberforce-Bell, *Kathiawad*, p. 67.
[5] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p.285.
[6] Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p.113.
[7] Wilberforce-Bell, *Kathiawad*, p. 67.
[8] Watson, "Sketch of the Kathis. Especially those of the tribe of Khachar and house of Chotila," p.321, Wilberforce-Bell, *Kathiawad*, p. 67.

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The Gohils were originally from the banks of the Luni in Marwar, on land taken from the Bhīls.[9] This tradition is affirmed by a parallel one in Rajasthan. They were expelled from Marwar in the thirteenth century by the Rāṭhods and came to the region of Junagadh where they were granted villages by the Cuḍāsamā ruler with a commission to protect these lands against the depredations of the Khānt Bhīls. The Gohils expanded into several regions, finally conquering Valabhi from the Vāḷās.

Mokhḍājī, a Gohil ruler who was a contemporary of Muḥammad b. Tughluq, became particularly notorious as a pirate chieftain. He took up strong positions on the 'Khakhra' hills between the Gulf of Cambay and Palitana for attacks on surrounding areas, of which he conquered several, including the island of Piram and the port of Gogha, from the Kolī Bāriās. From these points, he was able to control the sea-trade and engage in piracy: 'At Perumbh he kept many a ship, for the roads to many countries lay there, many a vessel did he plunder; in every port he was an object of terror. From all that sailed he exacted tribute did the raja seated upon the throne of Perumbh.'[10] Eventually, Muḥammad b. Tughluq had to subdue this piratical chief to safeguard the Cambay trade. He was engaged in battle and was defeated and killed, the pretext for the battle being that he had plundered a merchant whose goods he had undertaken to protect. After his removal the island of Piram was deserted.[11]

Another tradition records the entry of a branch of the Soḍhā tribe into Gujarat from Sind, probably in the fourteenth century. In consequence of famine at Parkar, two thousand Soḍhā Parmārs with their wives and children are said to have entered Gujarat. They settled near Muli and were granted four districts of 24 villages each by the Vāghelās of Vadhvan in return for reducing the powerful Bhīls of the Sabarmati ravines. They evicted the Bābriās from the region of Than and Chotila and founded the town of Muli. During the reign of Maḥmūd I, one branch of the family was converted to Islam and settled at Ranpur, the Ranpur Molesalāms. The other branch remained at Muli although they were evicted from there in the sixteenth century by the Kāṭhīs. The Jats or Jāts of Bajana were vassals of the Parmārs of Than and played an important part in the army of Maḥmūd Begaḍā in the siege of Champaner in 1484. The sultan bestowed the region of Bajana upon them – which again, they had to conquer for themselves. Assimilation was therefore conditional on establishing military prowess and, as was the case in many medieval states, a 'vassal' who was able to conquer a territory was given control over it.

Several chieftains maintained a dual role as plunderers and as landholders. In a province

[9] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p. 295.
[10] Ibid., p. 307.
[11] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.144.

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as commercially vibrant as Gujarat, large loads of goods proceeded through the interiors, protected on their journey by guards and bards. Kolff quotes Mundy (1619) as saying that caravans of goods were accompanied by armed guards such as Balūchīs or Jāts, apart from professional carters and cameleers.[12] Professional guards such as these had multiple functions. The *Mir'at-i-Aḥmadī* in the eighteenth century describes them as a source of resistance against Kolīs, useful also in attacking villages, drawing away cattle, escorting notables, collecting tribute from *zamīndārs*, acting as recruits for armies and so on. They supported themselves usually by their own fields.[13]

Certain communities such as *garāsiyās* and Kolīs, suggests Kolff, furnished military bondsmen. They '... partook of the quality that 'marginal peoples' generally have from a military point of view. Peasant robbers from the hills or forests make excellent skirmishers against their own kind and may well become a main element in established armies.'[14] Emphasis was also placed on agreements with chieftains who demanded cesses or taxes in return for guaranteeing the safety of caravans through their territories. While the Bhīls and Kolīs remained a constant terror for merchants, there are instances in which Bhīls were induced to police the forest areas that they lived in, in return for autonomy.[15] In addition, bards such as Bhāṭs or Cāraṇs customarily accompanied merchant caravans, since their presence served as a security for the merchants in a code that was generally acceptable. The curse of a Bhāṭ or Cāraṇ, traditionally sons of the mother goddess, was much feared and a plunderer would necessarily receive that curse. They also could commit a rite of self-mutilation to the point of suicide, called *trāga*, to further pressurise a plunderer, since the sin of injuring or killing a Bhāṭ was an extremely serious one.[16]

While some of these clans were groups of 'warriors-ascetics' in search of marriage alliances and patronage, others were owners of cattle wealth on a large scale. The clans, then, need to be seen in terms not just of their political status, their roles as vassals or the number of villages they controlled, but also differentially in terms of their changing occupations in the period. Groups that entered Gujarat as pastoralists could settle down to become cultivators, small bands of forest-dwelling cultivators could achieve military successes and become chieftains. In the agrarian landscape in the fifteenth century, most activities were armed – even peasants were

[12] Kolff, *Naukar*, p. 4.
[13] Khan, *MA Supplement, trans.*, p.580, Kolff, *Naukar*, p. 5.
[14] Kolff, *Naukar*, p. 18.
[15] See Stewart Gordon, "Bhils and the Idea of a Criminal Tribe," in *Marathas, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century Central India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.152.
[16] A.K. Forbes, *Ras Mala. Hindoo Annals of the Province of Goozerat in Western India*, vol. II (London: 1878), p.262n, A.M. Shah and R.S. Shroff, "The Vahivancha Barots of Gujarat," in *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, ed. Milton Singer (1975), pp.44-45.

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armed and no one power was able to monopolise the immense armed manpower in the countryside.

The recurring threat of Bhīls as a disruptive force was not so much as the destroyers of 'civilisation' or a courtly way of life, but possibly, more because they could drive off valuable cattle, could forcibly harvest fields or disrupt an agrarian/pastoralist order. However, even the 'Rajput' chieftains in this period were not generally rulers of cities or palatial settlements but prosperous agriculturists or herders living in wooden dwellings in small villages. While some chieftains were able to hire or rent labour to actually till their fields, in many cases it was the clan itself which carried out agriculture and transported goods. Life in the countryside was very different from that in the great port towns or commercial centres, few if any of which were controlled by these chieftains. Very little separated a chieftain from the neighbouring Bhīls or Kolīs who also were cultivators or pastoralists, or on the coast, fishing, trading or piratical communities.

'Garāsiyā', the term that came to be used in the period for landholders did not specify the ethnic or community origin of the landholder (although Kolīs or Bhīls were generally singled out).[17] The term could be used for landholders of different grades – whether small *zamīndārs*, chieftains of hill fortresses or major chieftains belonging to prestige clans. This extensive differentiation of rural landholdings amongst countless claimants to the produce, cattle and consequent social status led to a situation in which attempts at centralised revenue collection or even assessment were generally unsuccessful. The sultans of Gujarat were never able to enforce such a system, the most they could do was to demand a regular tribute from landholders. Attempts at imposing a *jāgīr* system generally failed: the sultans usually asked a claimant for favours to conquer the granted lands, in return for virtual autonomy subject to the payment of tribute. Few attempts were made to prevent 'fief' holders from forming local roots; on the contrary, nobles were encouraged to cultivate local power bases since that extended the reach of the sultanate into the countryside. As for chieftains, they were left virtually free to administer their land and it was by the fear of military force that revenues in the form of tribute were extracted from them.

There was also a continuity between chieftain and plunderer or pirate. Some of the coastal chiefs, often castigated as pirates, had access to trade goods, generally through plunder, an example being Mokhḍājī Gohil of Gogha and Piram. Plunder was profitable only until it could be regularised. When the state stepped in to control it, it could become an irregular and risky

[17] Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.252, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.55.

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enterprise and did not ensure regular supplies. It was therefore in the interest of most landed chieftains either to offer tribute to the sultans or to make a military arrangement with them, contravention of which could lead to conflict with immense armies and increased levies from the rest of the countryside. Several communities did make such arrangements with the sultan whose forces consisted of with local chieftains and peasant groups aided by itinerant mercenaries. Maḥmūd Begaḍā's siege of Champaner was much aided by the Jāts of Sind.[18] The chief of Rajpipla undertook to send horse and foot soldiers to the sultan's armies whenever necessary.[19] On the other hand, military resources for the chieftains were connected mainly to their agrarian or pastoralist resources: after the supply lines to northern supplies were cut off, they had only a limited chance of securing larger alliances or military equipment.

Status and reinvention: the Cuḍāsamās of Junagadh

The question of pastoralism has more importance for the history of Kathiavad than of Gujarat, where a more urban scene prevailed. There were often divergent processes in Gujarat, Kathiavad and Kacch, the former of which came under the rule of governors of the Delhi sultans from the first decade of the fourteenth century, while the latter two areas were finally only subdued by Gujarat sultan Maḥmūd Begaḍā in the second half of the fifteenth century. Many sources record the advent of pastoralist groups as they entered the region as herders, traders or seafarers. Some of these groups took to sedentary lives and acquired in time the social and political systems of settled agrarian communities. Others stayed on the move, retaining their occupational flexibility and a certain adaptability in affiliation to religious traditions.

It needs to be pointed out here that there were two kinds of migrations into Gujarat. One, as Kolff highlights, was the incursion of small bands of warriors, often dispossessed junior relatives of established lineages in Rajasthan who came in search of patrons and employers and offered their military services. The other kind, not always distinct from the first, was the incursion of entire clans with their cattle wealth and families, driven south by famine, local oppression or the hope of better pastures. These were accommodated as feudatories by host chieftains, given land to graze or inhabit and were expected to be loyal to their sponsor-clan. Assimilation was conditional on establishing military prowess and, as was the case in many medieval states, a 'vassal' who was able to conquer a territory was given control over it.

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[18] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.62.
[19] Nizam al-Din Ahmad, *The Tabaqat-i-Akbari of Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmad*, trans. Brajendranath De, 3 vols., vol. III (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1927-29), p.71.

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An example of the process by which a pastoralist group originating in Sind became one of the prestige Rajput clans of Saurashtra and Kacch is that of the Sammās. Branches of the Sammā clan (who trace their descent to Kṛṣṇa) moved into Kacch and Saurashtra where they eventually became the important Rajput ruling houses of the Jāḍejās in Kacch and the Cuḍāsamās in Junagadh. Latterday histories of these clans play down the fact that they had a pastoralist low-status past with significant links with Islam. Other branches stayed on in Sind where they were known as the Sammā Jāms. The latter were Muslims and even had marriage links with the sultans of Gujarat in the fifteenth century. The Cuḍāsamās, however, were not Muslims. They became the most important rulers in Saurashtra and were the greatest threat in the peninsula to the Gujarat sultans. They also constructed their history in a Hindu religious idiom. In the fifteenth century, a Sanskrit court chronicle of the last Cuḍāsamā ruler projected him as a part-incarnation of Viṣṇu. They did, however, have ties with their Muslim clanspeople in Sind. As early as the twelfth century, the Cuḍāsamās were joined in a campaign against the Caulukyas of Anhilvada by a contingent of Sammās from Sind.[20] Perhaps significantly, the last Cuḍāsamā ruler is said to have converted to Islam after his defeat at the hands of Maḥmūd Begaḍā in 1469.[21]

The Jāḍejās in Kacch, on the other hand, have often been suspected of Muslim connections.

> These Jadejas, although generally spoken of as, and claiming to be Rajputs, appear originally to have been a tribe native to Sind and converts to Mohametism. They were probably expelled from Sind some 500 years ago, and settled themselves by conquest in Kutch. Thence in 1539 they spread into Kathiawar, and there, surrounded by Hindu Rajput tribes, viz., the Jetwas, Jhallas, and others, they reverted to Hinduism.[22]

They were also believed to have occasionally intermarried with Muslims and thus lost status. The Kacch Jāḍejās in the early nineteenth century visited mosques and, in fact, were considered half Hindu and half Muslim.[23] 'Political causes have disunited them from the Mahomedans, and they desire again to be considered as pure Rajpoots; but having been contaminated, no Rajpoot will intermarry with them.'[24]

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[20] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, pp.58-60.
[21] See section on Conversion in Chapter 4, infra.
[22] H.R. Cooke, Rev. J. Wilson, and Col. A. Walker, *Repression of Female Infanticide in the Bombay Presidency. A Compilation Report, setting out briefly all the measures taken to repress the crime in Gujarat and some of the neighbouring native states, and the result of those measures.*, Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government. No. CXLVII.-New Series. (Bombay: 1875), fn., p.5.
[23] Campbell and Kirparam, eds., *Hindus*, vol. I, p.126.
[24] James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, or the Central and Western Rajput States of India*, 3 vols. (London: 1829-32; reprint, 1920), vol. I, p.507.

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The reiterated Muslim taint in the history of the Jāḍejā clan led them to a ritually degraded status and the practice of female infanticide as husbands of suitable status could not be found for their daughters. Scattered evidence for a proclivity towards Islam among the Jāḍejās and related clans, such as the Cuḍāsamās of Junagadh, emerges from the earliest period at which they can be traced and continues throughout their history. One of the Raos of Kacch in the eighteenth century actually converted to Islam and is buried in the precincts of a mosque.

The ruling dynasty of the Cuḍāsamās of Junagadh ended in the fifteenth century and their descendants were minor but prestigious Rajput landholders in the nineteenth century. It is more difficult to find whether the Cuḍāsamās had similar links with Islam, or indeed had anything but a 'proud' Rajput ancestry. As the Cuḍāsamās achieved a settled court society, a clearly Hindu identity and aspirations to prestige Rajput status in the fifteenth century, it began to be convenient for them to jettison all traces of heterodox or non-Sanskritic cultural practices that are attributed to them in Caulukya sources. Shortly before the defeat and dethroning of the last Cuḍāsamā, Rā Māṇḍalik, a Sanskrit eulogy was written in his praise by an itinerant poet from Vijayanagara.[25] The *Māṇḍalika-mahākāvya* is also the only written text from the Cuḍāsamā court that has survived to the present.[26] The text is in the tradition of classical Sanskrit eulogy and while it contains several interesting social details, essentially represents the fact that Cuḍāsamās in the fifteenth century needed the legitimation derived from patronising Sanskrit literature. The text, therefore, represents the Cuḍāsamās as they would have liked to be portrayed and contains few clues to a lower status or culturally ambiguous past.

The long-term history of a Rajput clan characterised by its 'pride of race' also throws up several features that are not strictly brahmanical and illustrates how brahmanism incorporates and codifies elements from the ideological world of politically powerful groups who, in this case, emerged on the fringes of brahmanical civilisation. This historical process also clarifies the politics of the recording and perpetuation of information by bardic groups, such as the Cāraṇs, with whom clans like the Jāḍejās and Cuḍāsamās had a symbiotic relationship of patronage and legitimation. Before the fifteenth century, Sind, Kacch and Kathiavad were frontier areas for Hindu civilisation, albeit with great ritual significance. Many of the great centres of pilgrimage were to be found in these areas such as Dvaraka, Girnar, Somanath and Multan in upper Sind.

[25] H.D. Velankar, "Mandalika Mahakavya (Mandalikanrpa-carita)," *Bharatiya Vidya* XIV-XV (1953-54).
[26] Several Sanskrit inscriptions, many with king-lists, have survived from the reign of the Cuḍāsamās, but all of them were actually commissioned by local merchants or feudatories.

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Nevertheless, brahmanically sanctioned legal and customary systems had a tenuous hold on the ruling clans of these regions.[27]

The process of identity formation of many of the groups who by the sixteenth century were beginning to claim the common identity of 'Rajput' and align themselves with prestige clans in Rajasthan may be traced in the period under consideration. However, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they still had a considerable diversity in political status, position in the caste hierarchy, ethnic origin and even occupation. Most 'Rajputs' were militarised nomad pastoralist groups with little or no evidence of a settled court society before the fifteenth century. For such groups, bards functioned as priests, genealogists and guarantors. In return for patronage they provided religious legitimation, perpetuated or prepared suitable versions of their lineage and arranged marriage and military alliances. Although bards such as the Cāraṇs depended on the Rajputs for patronage, they could also inflict harm on them by the withdrawal of their favour and thereby that of their goddess. For example, the Cuḍāsamās do not appear in bardic accounts as unambiguously glorious rulers. They are inevitably to be found on the losing side of any conflict with the kings of Gujarat. Several of them are depicted as having a fatal fascination for women, a trait which eventually cost them their throne. When Rā Māṇḍalik, the last Cuḍāsamā ruler, made advances towards a Cāraṇ woman (Cāraṇīs are powerful embodiments of *śakti*), she cursed him and foretold the loss of his kingdom. A version of the legend records that although a Muslim *pīr* from Girnar, Jamial Shāh, attempted to intercede with the king on behalf of the Cāraṇī, he was unrepentant and the curse stood.[28] Any hereditary allegiance of the Cāraṇs to the Cuḍāsamās did not prevent them recording incidents in which they appeared in a less than positive light.

The Cāraṇs and the vocabulary of negotiation and alliance that they represented stood as guarantors of a mutually accepted legal system between clans. This was enforced by the sacrality of the mother goddess embodied by the person of the Cāraṇ. Any infringement of an agreement or alliance brokered by the Cāraṇs brought about the curse of the goddess. In order to maintain their credibility among different clans, the Cāraṇs were obliged to maintain a degree of impartiality. While genealogies and family histories preserved by them were, as with any other mechanism of recording, subject to subtle manipulation by the patrons, the Cāraṇs did not always record versions preferred by their clients. Thus, genealogies and legends preserved by the bards,

[27] We hear of brahmanas who were periodically imported into these regions. The history of the region by a Diwan of Junagadh relates that Nāgar, Girnārā, Sarasvati and Soraṭhā brahmanas were invited into Saurashtra by the kings of Junagadh, especially by Rā Navghaṇ II in the twelfth century. Ranchhodji Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath, A History of the Provinces of Sorath and Halar in Kathiawad*, trans. E. Rehatsek (Bombay and London: 1882), pp. 26-27.

[28] Ibid., p. 33.

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as also the esoteric traditions concerning the Cuḍāsamās in the oral tradition of lower caste groups, contain traces of a past in which their religious and political identity was less certain. These traditions preserved and coded phases of a low-status, pastoralist origin, with evidence of patronage to and legitimation from religious and cultic groups that the later Cuḍāsamās would prefer forgotten. Even after the sedentarisation and gradual brahmanisation of clans such as the Cuḍāsamās, the bards continued to have a great influence, right into the nineteenth century.

The *Māṇḍalika-mahākāvya* was therefore written substantially for symbolic reasons. It was produced in a milieu in which Sanskrit learning was hard to come by and, if found, was usually a preserve of the literate and prosperous Jaina merchant community. Junagadh and Girnar housed a varied selection of religious cults, among which the revivalist Vaiṣṇavism proved to have the greatest lasting significance. The Cuḍāsamā clan thus made a long journey from Sind to Junagadh, from cattle herding and struggles for pasture to a settled court with an army, brahmanas, bureaucrats and poets, from negotiating for the allegiance of a variety of cults and sects to projecting a classically courtly image in the *Mahākāvya*.

According to legends collected from bards in Kathiavad in the nineteenth century, the Jāḍejās and the Cuḍāsamās trace their ancestry to a militarised herding clan, the Sammās, who inhabited Sind in the ninth century. The Sammās were pastoralists, probably a number of itinerant clans with large animal wealth, consisting of camels, sheep or cattle. One branch of the Sammās entered the peninsula of Kathiavad in the ninth century and wrested the principality of Vanthali from the local ruler, Vāḷārām Cāvaḍā.[29] They subsequently moved to the fortified Junagadh, from where they ruled a large part of the peninsula of Kathiavad until the second half of the fifteenth century – a remarkable span of seven hundred years. The traditional etymology explains that this branch of the Sammās took its name from its leader, Cūḍā or Candracūḍa, and came to be known as the Cuḍāsamā. Other branches of the clan settled in Kacch, some of whom took their name from a common ancestor, Jāḍā, hence their name Jāḍejā. In the nineteenth century, the Jāḍejās. Sammās, Cuḍāsamās and Bhaṭṭīs considered themselves related, however distantly, as Yādavas and descendants of Kṛṣṇa and did not intermarry.[30]

The genealogy of the Sammās, Cuḍāsamās and Jāḍejās records that Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa, was captured by pirates while on a sea voyage near Dvaraka and was taken to the city of

[29] One account says that the Cuḍāsamās came from Saminagar in Sind, now known as Thatta. *Kathiawar*, Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. 8 (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1884), p.408.
[30] Campbell and Kirparam, eds., *Hindus*, p.124.

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Śoṇitapur, the City of Blood.[31] Sāmba married Okhā, the daughter of the local ruler. When he died, he was succeeded by the son of Sāmba and Okhā. His descendant, seventy-ninth in the line of succession, was Devavṛtta Yādava who ruled Śoṇitapura in the sixth century A.D who was killed in a battle against the armies of 'Alī.[32] Subsequently, his four sons Aspat, Gajpat, Narpat and Bhūpat left Śoṇitapur and went to seek their fortunes, conquering Syria and Egypt. Aspat was defeated when the Muslim forces conquered Egypt and he accepted Islam. His descendants were the Sammās who went on to rule Sind. The other brothers then went to Afghanistan where Gajpat conquered the city of Gajna/Ghazna. However the pursuing Muslim armies caught up with him and he was killed.

Bhūpat moved south, conquered the Silindrapur area of India and established the city of Bhāṭiyā-nagar (in Panjab). This clan later established the city of Jaisalmer. In Tod's account, the genealogy of the Bhaṭṭīs has a similar claim to Yadu or Yādava descent from Kṛṣṇa. After the death of Kṛṣṇa, his sons retreated to Multan, then proceeded to the Doab, passed into Zabulistan, founded 'Gajni' (Ghazna) and had an influence as far as Samarkand. It is not known how they were driven back to India but, on their return, they conquered Punjab, established Salbhanpur, then driven out of there, occupied the region of Jaisalmer.

The fourth brother Narpat came to Sind and established the city Nagar-Samoi which later came to be known as Thatta. He was the ancestor of Candracuda, the first Cuḍāsamā ruler of Vanthali. James Burgess encountered a slightly different version of the story.

> The Jadeja or Jhadeja princes of Kachh... trace their descent through a mythical line of eighty sovereigns of Sonitapura and Misr – the latter Egypt, the former (otherwise called Devikota) the capital of Banasura, a legendary king in Southern India... We come to something more like a real personage in Jam Narpat, though he is said to have fled with three brothers from Misr, 'embarking from the port of Urmara'[33] and to have gone to Osam hill in Sorath,[34] where his eldest brother Ugrasena, became a Muhammadan and took the name of Aspat, while a younger

[31] Desai identifies Sonitapur with Babylon. Rayjada suggests that it is to be identified with Sana in Yemen or with a place near Ukhimath in the Himalayas, on the banks of the Mandakini. Shambhuprasad Haraprasad Desai, *Saurashtra-no Itihas (History of Saurashtra)*, 3rd ed. (Rajkot: Pravin Prakashan, 1991), pp.222-3, Vikramsinh Bharatsinh Rayjada, *Cudasama Rajvamsh-no Itihas. Cudasama Rajvamsh-ni Prashasti Kavita. Cudasama, Sarvaiya ane Rayjada Shakha-nan Itihas Sathe* (Rajkot: Dr. Vikramsinh B. Rayjada, 1995), p.11. The *Bombay Gazetteer* favours the identification with Sana. *Kathiawar*, vol. II, p.586.. Another version of the story says that it was Pradyumna, the son of Jambuvati who was captured and taken to Sonitapur.

[32] Rayjada's variant has Garvagod as the ruler of Sonitapur. 22nd in the line of descent from Garvagod was Devendra who married Okha. Their four sons were Ajpat, Gajpat, Narpat and Bhupat. Rayjada, *Cudasama Rajvamsh*, p.11.

[33] Urmara could be an indigenous term used for the port of Ormuz or Hormuz in the Persian Gulf.

[34] A branch of the Cuḍāsamās, descended from the third son of Rā Navghaṇ (1067-1098) did settle at Osam-Patanvav. Rayjada, *Cudasama Rajvamsh*, p. 39.

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brother, Gajapat, is the traditional ancestor of the Cuḍāsamās of Sorath. Narpat is then said to have taken Gazni,[35] killing Firuz Shah. He was succeeded by his son Sammā, the ancestor of the Sammās, who was driven from Gazni 'by Sultan Shah the son of Firuz Shah,' and went to live at Kijaranand.[36]

A similar genealogy of the Sammās of Sind, albeit with some token Islamisation, is found in the *Tuhfat al-Kirām*, a history of Sind written in the eighteenth century.[37] The primal ancestor here was the prophet Nūh whose son was Sām or Jām. The Sammās thus derive their name from the ancestor Sām (cf. Sāmba in the Hindu version), or alternatively, from their origin in Syria or Shām. The four brothers, here Haibat, Gajpat, Bhūpat and Curāsamā, were descended from Nūh through their father Jādam or Jādav (cf. Devavṛtta Yādava above), Rām, Daśarath and Bhagīrath. Correspondingly with the 'Hindu' genealogy, Haibat was the ancestor of the Sammās, Bhūpat of the Bhaṭṭīs and Curāsamā, the ruler of Junagadh.

After the Ghurid annexation of Sind, the Sūmrā clan ruled southern Sind, especially the region of Thatta.[38] They were harried regularly by the sultans of Delhi and were often obliged to move their capital. By the early fourteenth century, there is evidence that they were being eclipsed in southern Sind by the Sammās who took over most of Sind and ruled from Thatta until the sixteenth century. It is not known when the latter converted to Islam. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they certainly appear to be Sunni. One of the Jāms sent two of his daughters to be married to the Sunni sultan of Gujarat and the Bukhārī ṣūfī Shāh ʿĀlam. However, there is some evidence that the Sammās also had a secret or previous phase of allegiance to Ismāʿīlism. Legends of Mātang, a Nizārī Ismāʿīlī-influenced saint of untouchable communities in Kacch and Saurashtra mention that he helped the Sammā Jām of Sind to defeat Maḥmūd of Ghazna. He and his descendants thus became *kul-gurus* of the kings of Kacch, Junagadh and Sind.[39]

Returning to the Cuḍāsamās, we find that their first ruler to be mentioned in the chronicles of the Caulukya kingdom of eastern Gujarat was Graharipu (or Gārio in the bardic chronicles) of Vanthali, the arch rival of the Caulukya Mūlarāja of Anhilvada.[40] The *Dvyāśraya-kāvya* (c.1174) by a Jaina teacher at the court of the twelfth century Caulukya ruler Siddharāja is a telling example of how the more Sanskritised Caulukyas characterised their enemies as barbarians and enemies of settled civilisation :

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[35] Burgess heard that Gazni was an ancient name of Cambay. Burgess, *Report*, p.43.
[36] Ibid., p. 196.
[37] Elliot and Dowson, *History I*, pp. 336-339. The fact that there is a concordance between the 'Hindu' genealogies encountered by Tod, Burgess, Desai and Rayjada and the 'Muslim' one in the *Tuhfat al-Kirām*, suggest that they had a common origin, namely the bards or Cāraṇs.
[38] al-Hamdani, *Beginnings*, p. 7.
[39] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p. 99.
[40] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p.53 fn.

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> This shepherd is very tyrannical; ruling in Soorashtra, on a throne until his time shining with the splendor derived from the rule of Shree Krishn, he slays the pilgrims that travel towards Prubhas, and strews the highway with their flesh and bones.... he despises Brahmins, and plunders people passing along the road; .... This barbarian hunts upon mount Girnar, and slays the deer at Prubhas. He eats the flesh of cows, and drinks spirituous liquor .... He is strong in military force, so that all rajas are compelled to bend to him. He is very wealthy; he seized the Raja of Sindh and compelled him to pay, as a fine, elephants and horses, and he has subdued many other sovereigns... He destroys great forts and safe places among the mountains; he can pass and repass the ocean too, therefore people have no single means of escaping....

The terms used to describe Graharipu, the Ābhīra or shepherd king and his confederates – *mleccha, daitya* – are often used in Sanskrit texts to characterise or stigmatise Muslims.[41] Supporting the claim of the Cuḍāsamās that they were related to the Sammās of Kacch, the Caulukya text adds:

> Kutch, too, is within easy reach of Soreth, and Lakha, the lord thereof, the son of Phoola, a great raja and unconquered by any, is as inseparable from Grah Ripoo as if they were sons of the same mother. There are many other rajas, too, assisting these confederates, – barbarians, that cause terror to the universe.[42]

Mūlarāja set out against the 'barbarian confederacy' of Gārio and his familiar kinsmen, the chiefs of Sind and Kacch as well as many forest Bhīls. Prominent among the allies was Lākho Phūlāṇī, a prominent Sammā chief of Kacch who was probably brought up by an Ismā'īlī branch of the clan in Sind. Although help was summoned, the alliance was defeated and Lākha and Graharipu killed in the battle. Mūlarāja proceeded to the coast in order to worship the 'sacred Someshwur'.[43] A similar tale of this conflict is also preserved by the bards. As was to be the pattern in every successive confrontation between Gujarat and the peninsula, the prosperous east Gujarat won and the pastoralist west was reduced to feudatory status.

The antagonism with the Gujarat mainland continued in the story of Rā Dayās (traditionally dated 1003-1010) who was defeated by the Caulukyas. The history of Navghaṇ, Dayās' son, records the circumstances under which the pastoralist Āhīr clan, another group with an ambiguous cultural identity, was incorporated in the alliance structure that supported the Cuḍāsamās. A version of the tale also records the legitimation they received from the followers of Khoḍiyār and Śikotar, both non-Sanskritic medieval mother goddesses.

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[41] See B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims (8th-14th century)* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), p.30.
[42] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, p.56.
[43] Ibid., p.61.

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Navghaṇ survived the Caulukya conquest and was restored to power by an Āhīr chief who sacrificed his own son to save the prince and thus compelled his patronage and allegiance. The sacrifice of the son is reminiscent of the practice of the bardic Cāraṇs to enforce political and commercial agreements by threatening to mutilate or kill their families or themselves, thereby making defaulters liable to the curse of the mother goddess. The Cāraṇs' moral and spiritual authority was, for these pastoralist clans, the only available guarantee of agreements.

Navghaṇ received the ceremonial allegiance of the Āhīrs at his coronation in 1025. In return, the military power of the Cuḍāsamās was called upon for the protection of the sister clan in Sind from the evil and covetous Sūmrā.[44] In the wake of a great famine in Soraṭh, the Āhīrs moved north towards Sind in search of pasture and there came into conflict with the Sūmrā ruler. Navghaṇ marched to their aid, defeated the Sūmrā and secured at least nominal control over Sind.

He also, significantly, persuaded several Sindi Lohāṇā and Bhāṭiā merchants to move from Sind to Soraṭh.[45] While in the Sūmrā's palace in Sind, Navghaṇ was addressed by his patron goddess Śikotar who wished to move to Soraṭh. She had withdrawn her blessing from the arrogant Sūmrā and extended it to Navghaṇ who carried her to his capital in the form of water in a golden vessel. Here is evidence of additional legitimation from a deity of Sind. We know that Śikotar, the deified personification of the island of Socotra, is the patroness of sailors, fishermen and traders in Sind and Kacch, including the communities of Lohāṇās and Bhāṭiās.[46] Lohāṇās and Bhāṭiās preserve a tradition of coming to Kathiavad in the reign of Navghaṇ. It may reasonably be inferred that the desire of the goddess to shift to Soraṭh signified the support and legitimation of the trading communities who settled in Soraṭh in this period.

One version of this legend incorporates the story of the entry of the goddess Khoḍiyār as patron deity of the Cuḍāsamās. The Āhīrs are said to have been worshippers of Khoḍiyār who led them to buried treasure with which to arm themselves to overthrow the Caulukya viceroy. Also, on Navghaṇ's campaign to Sind, he encountered a young Cāraṇ girl who was the embodiment of the goddess Khoḍiyār. She caused the waters of the Rann to part to allow Navghaṇ's army to pass safely into Sind and rout the Sūmrā. The grateful Navghaṇ built a temple to Khoḍiyār on his return to Junagadh.[47] The goddess thus granted sovereignty to the Cuḍāsamā through the legitimation offered by the Āhīrs and the Cāraṇs in return for patronage.

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[44] Although the Sūmrās are believed to have ruled from 1053 onwards, they could have been tributary chiefs for as long as 200 years before that.
[45] Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p. 34-35.
[46] Campbell and Kirparam, eds., *Hindus*, p.520.
[47] Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, pp. 34-35.

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Incidentally, the Āhīrs, or pastoralists, have sometimes been seen as distinct from the Hindus. In a remarkable inscription of 1407 from Mangrol, Malik Malikshāh Badr Yatim Allāh, *muqṭa'* of Soraṭh abolished for the prosperity of the town (*qaṣba*) of Mangalor, and the contentment of the people, every impost which the kotwal of the town used to levy on the marriages of the Hindus and the Āhīrs and other such imposts in order that there may be spiritual and temporal freedom (*nijāt-i-dīn-o-dunīyāi*).[48]

The later Cuḍāsamās

From the fourteenth century, the Rās of Junagadh take on a more concrete appearance in inscriptions commissioned by their subjects. Most inscriptions are *pāliyās* or hero stones, placed on the outskirts of villages or near temples to commemorate clansmen who died fighting for the village, the king or in the defence of their possessions. Many of them are dated and several mention the reigning Cuḍāsamā king. The first *pāliyā* to mention a Cuḍāsamā king is dated 1377 and commemorates the death of an Āhīr who died fighting robbers. Other inscriptions are set into step-wells, ponds or temples and commemorate their builders, usually merchants, ministers or their wives. Several of these include the names of the ruler and his ancestors. The influence of Vaiṣṇava and Jaina traders and their vegetarian ethos is demonstrated in an inscription of 1451 in which Rā Māṇḍalik declared at his coronation that animal slaughter would be prohibited on the fifth, eighth, eleventh, fourteenth and *amāvas* of every month, in response to a petition by local traders.[49] An inscription from 1417 from Junagadh is the first to claim Yādava descent for the Cuḍāsamās (*Māṇḍalika-nṛpatiryadu-vaṃśe*), possibly in the context of increasing Vaiṣṇavite revivalist activity in the area, of which the 'non-sectarian Vaiṣṇava' Narsiṃha Mahetā was a part.[50]

The *Māṇḍalika-nṛpa-carita* (or *mahākāvya*) is the only written text commissioned by the Cuḍāsamās themselves that has survived to the present day. It is a long historical poem in 640 stanzas believed to have been written about 1460, at the height of the power of the Rā Māṇḍalika whose kingdom was annexed by Maḥmūd Begaḍā in 1472. According to the Persian chronicles Māṇḍalika subsequently converted to Islam and died in Ahmadabad a few years later. His successors were given land and a title and continued to live in the region of Junagadh. They

[48] Desai, *PAEG*, p. 15.
[49] Shastri, *HIG*, no. 78, p.143.
[50] F. Mallison, "Hinduism as seen by the Nizari Ismaili Missionaries of Western India: The Evidence of the Ginan," in *Hinduism Reconsidered*, ed. G.D. Sontheimer and Hermann Kulke (New Delhi: South Asia Institute, 1989), p.204.

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briefly came into prominence again during the struggle for power between the Mughals and the last of the Gujarat sultans in the 1570s.

The poet Gangādhara gives no details about himself except that he was a 'conqueror of the poets of the Kali age'. However, he may be identical with the author of the *Gangadāsa-pratāpavilāsa*, a historical play written at the court of Champaner in eastern Gujarat in the 1450s. If so, Gangādhara was an itinerant poet from Vijayanagara who had visited the court of Sultan Muḥammad II and having vanquished the poets of his court, proceeded to Champaner. It is reasonable to suppose that he next journeyed to Junagadh.

Gangādhara relates that the family of Māṇḍalik derived descent from the Moon and belonged to the Yādava clan.[51] In an account of Māṇḍalik's marriage, he includes gestures of allegiance from his Yādava allies, the king of Sindhu who held an umbrella over Māṇḍalika's head and the Vājā chief of the vicinity of Somanath who waved a pair of chowries over him. The king of Sindhu, in this period, was indisputably the Sammā Jām, either Jām Sanjar (1454-62) or the famous Jām Nindo alias Niẓām al-Dīn (1462-1509).

At the beginning of the poem, he identifies Kṛṣṇa and Śiva and pays obeisance to Śiva and Ambā. The family deity of the Cuḍāsamās is Rādhā Dāmodara to whom there is a temple on Girnar. Māṇḍalik also received favours from Dattātreya (10.34) whose temple is at the summit of Mount Girnar.[52]

After a poetic description of the city of Junagadh, the *Māṇḍalika-nṛpa-carita* continues with a summary of the exploits of Māṇḍalik's ancestors in which fighting the Yavanas (Muslims) figures prominently. In spite of himself, the poet also gives away indications that the Cuḍāsamās actually collaborated with the sultans of Gujarat. One day an envoy from the king of the Yavanas, i.e., the sultans, came to the court of Māṇḍalik's father Mahipāla and complained that the Gohil king Duda was wreaking havoc in the territories of the sultan together with his friends. Mahipāla then took the decision to collaborate with the sultan against the Gohil, a fact that is nowhere indicated in the Persian sultanate chronicles.

> On the one hand, a battle with the Yavanas, who had increased their strength owing to this Kali age, was not a happy thing. Already, the king of the Yavanas had deprived many kings of their kingdom. He however, has shown no open enmity towards the royal family of the Yadavas, since on many occasions, my ancestors had put to flight the armies of the Yavana kings on the battle field. ...

[51] Soma-vaṃśa 2.8; Candra-vaṃśa 7.31;Vidhu-kula 8.62; Sudhākiraṇa-vaṃśa 9.3; Yadu-kula 1.66; 3.35; 8.25; 8.29. The name Cuḍāsamā is mentioned only once and does not seem to refer directly to the name of the royal house (10.3). Velankar, "Mandalika Mahakavya," p.234.
[52] See Chapter 1.

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His decision was affirmed by his minister:

> That Yavana king, who on the strength of his army of elephants and thousands of horses has courted your friendship, oh King! What greater good and safety do you ask for? It would therefore be best for you to do what will be pleasing to him. On the other hand, if I were to recount the misdeeds of Duda, I am afraid I shall incur the displeasure of the prince. These chiefs always seek shelter under you when they are harassed by the Yavanas and yet claim as their own the lands bordering on your kingdom.

Subsequently, Māṇḍalika undertook to chastise Duda and killed him in battle for the sultan.

After being appointed crown prince, Māṇḍalik, possibly still functioning as an agent of the Gujarat sultan, had defeated the 'king Sangana of the western ocean'. This 'king' can be identified as a notorious pirate of the Vādhel clan who achieved control of parts of the coastal territory around modern Porbandar and Okha. The Vādhels, in common with many piratical and seafaring communities of the coast from Kathiavad to Makran were also converts to some form of Ismā'īlism.[53] Later, Māṇḍalika asked his minister whether any enemy remained to be laid low. The minister replied that the Yavana stood at a respectful distance and kings like Gohila sought shelter at his feet.

> But the king of the western ocean, Sangana by name, whose fortress defended by water is very strong, is still showing himself insolent, even when he has been conquered by you in an open battle... May you therefore conquer this king who lives in the island where Lord Viṣṇu has taken his residence after killing the demon Samkha, and plant a pillar of conquest there.

One of the villages in Okhamandal was still called Sangan Kotra in the nineteenth century. It was an island at high tide and was a refuge for pirates.[54] On seeing the approach of Māṇḍalika, Sangana escaped and his people surrendered. After planting the pillar of victory on the island and looting Sangana's palace, Māṇḍalika prepared to cross the sea on his way back to his capital. Just then Sangana reappeared and blocked his way with the help of a Pārasika (or Persian, possibly a Kacchi or Makrāni pirate) chief, probably from one of the coastal islands. It is interesting that both the Pārasika chief and Sangana are called Sindhuraja at various times. The Pārasika chief had a large army of horsemen and camel-riders, but Māṇḍalik's army defeated and captured him and Sangana. The latter was released by the chivalrous Māṇḍalik and soon continued his piratical career. Maḥmūd Begaḍā subsequently captured his son Bhīm and had him killed in Ahmadabad.[55]

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[53] *Kathiawar*, pp. 165, 287-88.
[54] Ibid., p. 165, fn. 1.
[55] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.78.

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In the last canto, the poet praises the king in exaggerated terms and puts in the mouth of the king a hymn in praise of Kṛṣṇa. The praise of the king is as follows:

> When Mandalika stands up to kill the Mlenchas, having mounted upon his horse and brandished his sword, people begin to say to each other: 'Is this Kalki, born as the destroyer of the Kali age' (10.4).
>
> 'Formerly there was that younger brother of Arjuna (i.e. Nakula), or in future there would be Kalki, who could be compared with Mandalika in riding a horse; but what kings of the present day are there who can be called his peers?'(10.7).
>
> 'When Vikrama has gone to the world of the gods through destiny, do not be anxious, oh supporter of beings i.e., Earth; for Viṣṇu's part-incarnation has descended to your world as king Mandalika to remove the poverty of all.'

In spite of the pious assurance of the poet, Māṇḍalik's days as ruler were now numbered. The Cuḍāsamās had been allowed to retain their realms in return for submission to the sultans of Gujarat but according to the sultanate chroniclers, Māṇḍalik's vainglory brought about his downfall. Soon after the completion of the eulogy, Maḥmūd Begaḍā defeated Māṇḍalik after a siege and finally annexed the kingdom.

The Cāraṇs also seem to have withdrawn their support to Māṇḍalik. In the accounts of the bards, Māṇḍalik's downfall was destined. He had angered a Cāraṇ woman with his advances who cursed him to lose his kingdom. Earlier, Māṇḍalik's ancestor in the thirteenth century, Rā Khengār, was said to have ravished a Mer woman, but he received his just deserts when her kinsmen wounded him so badly that he died.[56] But Māṇḍalik had committed further transgressions too. The *Ta'rīkh-i-Soraṭh* relates that 'the Raja had forcibly taken to himself Mohini, the beautiful wife of his minister Vishal. The injured husband, unable to show open resentment, schemed in secret for the downfall of his master. When the provisions in Girnar had given out, Vishal sent a messenger to the sultan that the opportunity was favourable for taking the fortress by assault. The king acted on the advice and before long the Rao came down to do him homage and handed up the keys of the fortress.'[57] Eventually, it would seem, both bards and courtiers withdrew their support to Māṇḍalik.

Maḥmūd made Junagadh a mint town and renamed it Mustafabad. Māṇḍalik's life was spared but he was made to convert to Islam and received the title Khān Jahān. Sikandar relates that Māṇḍalik was converted only after his arrival in Ahmadabad by the influence of the saintly Shāh ʿĀlam.[58] Khān Jahān and his descendants occupied an honoured place at the Ahmadabad court. The *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī* relates that whenever the Rā thought of Girnar and his past glory he

[56] *Kathiawar*, p. 487.
[57] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 117.
[58] See section on Conversion in Chapter 4, *infra*.

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sighed and wept.[59] The *Tārīkh-i-Soraṭh* relates that the dynasty of Rā Māṇḍalik was allowed to continue for another century as tributary *jāgīrdār*s at Junagadh under the control of the governors or *thānadār*s of Soraṭh appointed by the Gujarat sultans. Later, they were a scattered network of small chieftains who controlled many of the areas around Junagadh.

In the nineteenth century, the Cuḍāsamās did not suffer from a degraded status or the suspicion of a mixed Hindu-Islamic identity unlike the related and neighbouring Jāḍejās. Nor did their kin, the Sammās in Sind who, after their supercession in the sixteenth century, were able to project a clearly Sunni Muslim identity in spite of evidence of links with Ismā'īlism. The Jāḍejās, on the other hand, continued in power in Kachh and Jamnagar and evidence of their syncretic identity was clearly visible to British observers in the nineteenth century. In spite of the bards' ambivalence towards the Cuḍāsamās and in spite of the fact that Māṇḍalik did not die fighting like the stereotypical Rajput, but capitulated and even converted to Islam, the image of the Cuḍāsamās that persisted was of nobility and heroism in defeat. Eventually, the negotiated, mobile frontier world of alliance and genealogy represented and recorded by the bards was superseded and was replaced in the subsequent centuries by the brahmanical legal systems of the heartland. It would seem that the legitimatory effort launched by the last few Cuḍāsamā rulers, of which the high point was the *Māṇḍalika-nrpa-carita*, was ultimately successful in catapulting their lineage to a high and untarnished status.

Trade and politics in Kacch – the Jagaḍūcarita

One instance of the immigration, rise and political significance of a merchant group is related in the *Jagaḍūcarita*. The *carita* is the verse biography in Sanskrit of a Jaina merchant prince of Kacch who lived in the thirteenth century. It consists of linked episodes from the life of Jagaḍū, most of which are intended to explain and celebrate his life as an exemplary philanthropist.[60] Unusually for the *carita* form, it deals not with a royal personage, but with a 'simple' merchant.

Jagaḍū's ancestor Vīyaṭṭhu was a Śrīmālī Jaina, a division of traders who trace their ancestry to the town of Śrīmāla or Bhillamāla in southern Marwad. Śrīmālīs are occasionally mentioned in the inscriptions of Gujarat of the eleventh century. His son Varaṇāga settled in Kanthkot in eastern Kacch which was within the Caulukya dominions since the beginning of their rule. Varaṇāga's grandson was Vīsala whose son Solaka emigrated to Bhadreshvar where his wife Śrī had three sons, Jagaḍū, Rāja and Padma.

[59] Bayley, *Local Muhammadan Dynasties of Gujarat*, pp.189-90, 193.
[60] For the links between trade and Jainism in this text, see Chapter 4.

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After the death of Solaka, Jagaḍū became the provider for the family. He married Yaśomatī and found wives for his brothers. Although he was generous by temperament, he came into possession of a talisman purchased from a shepherd which made him richer than ever and allowed him to indulge his generosity. Jagaḍū had no sons and his wife advised him to propitiate the gods to obtain a son. The god of the ocean declared that he would never have a son but that fortune would be faithful to him and all his ships would come safely to port. He also presented Jagaḍū with some excellent jewels from his treasury. Thereafter, Jagaḍū went from strength to strength: 'the lamp of Sola's race, whose ships always arrived safely by virtue of the boon granted by the Ocean, shone in that town with increasing brilliancy, his glory being equal to that of Indra'.[61]

Having miraculously acquired wealth-generating properties from a herder of livestock and the ocean, Jagaḍū extended his business activities into another field. One of his assistants acquired at great cost a mysterious stone from the shore of a port in the Persian Gulf. Later, a Śaivite yogi advised Jagaḍū to split open the stone which was found to be full of jewels. Again, Jagaḍū had enriched himself from a mysterious source and even acquired cooperation from the local Śaivites to exploit it.

Having enriched himself, Jagaḍū now made a bid for political influence. He was now not merely a munificent and exemplary merchant but the saviour of his town. The tale goes as follows: Kacch was invaded by king Pīṭhadeva of Parkar, the Sūmrā chieftain Piṭṭhu, who destroyed the town wall of Bhadreshvar.[62] After returning to his own land, Pīṭhadeva heard that Jagaḍū was rebuilding the ramparts and sent him a messenger with the taunting message: 'The illustrious king Pīṭhadeva thus loudly speaks to thee through my mouth, 'When two horns grow on the head of an ass, then thou will erect here a rampart!' At this challenge, Jagaḍū vowed to set horns on the head of an ass and to build the ramparts too. The messenger rebuked him for destroying his race through excessive pride in his wealth. If he accepted the order of the king of Parkar, he might enjoy his riches in peace.

This is the first time that Jagaḍū made a political gesture beyond the normal accumulation of riches that might be expected of a merchant. He sent the messenger back, refusing to stop building the rampart and thereby rejecting the sovereignty of Pīṭhadeva. He then visited the Vāghelā capital Anhilvada to seek the support of the ruler Lavaṇaprasāda (r.1200-1233) and

[61] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.10.
[62] Bhadreshvar was overrun by Pīṭhadeva of Pāra, identified with Phiṭu or Phaṭu, a Sūmrā chief, a popular and powerful Muslim king of Sind (r.1193-1226) Sayyid Muhammad Ma`sum Bakkari, *Tarikh-i-Sind*, 1938, pp. 61, 290 and Mir `Ali Shir Qani Thattawi, *Tuhfat al-Kiram* (Hyderabad: 1971), p.69.

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represented to him that Pīṭhadeva's destruction of the ramparts was a challenge to Vāghelā sovereignty. He asked Lavaṇaprasāda for a protecting army of the 'thrice twelve' great Kśatriya tribes, which he duly received. Hearing of this, Pīṭhadeva fled his residence.

Jagaḍū then rebuilt the wall and above it built a 'dwelling of the god Bhadra who disguised appeared to him at night.' The rampart 'resembled Śiva's mountain and was beautified by an excellent encircling moat.' When the wall was completed, he sent the army back, 'keeping other warriors in his service.' He then triumphantly sent Pīṭhadeva an obscene carving concerning his mother and an ass with golden horns. Pīṭhadeva died of horror on receiving the sculpture.[63] This dispatching of Pīṭhadeva also brought Jagaḍū the approval of the king of Sind, the Muslim Sammā Jām who 'he gladdened Jagaḍūka with gifts and honours.'

Jagaḍū had now made two important strategic moves for local political power: reasserted Caulukya sovereignty in the region and effectively pushed back the Sūmrā challenge from eastern Kacch. This also achieved local representative status for himself. After having established his pretensions to political influence in the region, he made conspicuous demonstrations of Jaina piety. He invited a senior Jaina teacher and led a pilgrimage to the Jaina holy sites with the permission of the new Vāghelā ruler Vīsaladeva. On his return, Jagaḍū conducted several pious acts which included the building and renovation of various Jaina temples and images. He had wells, tanks, a hospital and gardens constructed as well as a brahmanical temple, that of Hariśankara. In addition and most significantly, he built a *masīti* (*masjid*, mosque) called Ṣīmalī (pertaining to the Ismā'īlīs) 'by reason of the wealth of the mlecchas'.[64] There is indeed a mosque identified as that of an Ismā'īlī community in Bhadreshvar which is also the earliest Islamic monument in India.[65] For Jagaḍū to consolidate his political base, it was necessary to keep the local trading communities happy.

Jagaḍū's political influence was next demonstrated during a great famine about which he had been warned by his Jaina teacher. On the latter's instructions, he had stocked up on

[63] Carvings of this description to convey curses or maledictions are not uncommon in Saurashtra. Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.77. They were also found in the eighteenth century: 'And sometimes during the rainy season silver coins with the image of an ass are found – said to have been struck in the name of Raja Gadhesingh, about whom strange stories are told.' Khan, *MA Supplement, trans.*, p.211. A parallel tradition from Gedi in Kacch demonstrates that Jagaḍū's is an archetypal story: A potter's ass, Gadhesingh, had the ability to assume human form at night and in this form, asked the potter to get him married to the daughter of the town's ruler. He was challenged to build a copper wall around the town, which he duly fulfilled and secured the princess' hand in marriage. After the wedding, the raja's daughter burnt the skin of the ass and Gadhesingh and the copper wall disappeared. A similar legend was recorded about the origins of the city of Cambay. D.P. Khakhar, *Report on the Architectural and Archaeological Remains in the Provinces of Kachh.* (Bombay: 1879), p.39.

[64] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.18.

[65] Shokoohy, Bayani-Wolpert, and Shokoohy, *Bhadresvar*, p. 33.

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foodgrains so that he could exploit the coming time of want and hunger to 'Gain great fame, brilliant like the waves of the milk-ocean, by saving the lives of men in the whole world.' When famine came, Jagaḍū was prepared. 'After two years of the famine had passed, the stores in the granaries of the kings were exhausted and prices rose to such a height that one dramma was paid for thirteen grains of gram.' The ruler of Anhilvada, Vīsaladeva Vāghelā, had reached the end of his resources and sent his minister Nāgaḍa to summon Jagaḍū who appeared accompanied by merchants, bearing presents but dressed austerely. Vīsaladeva asked him whether the report that he possessed 'seven hundred well filled granaries' was true.

> Jagaḍū smilingly replied that he possessed no grain of his own and that the king could easily convince himself of the truth of this statement, if he would send for the copperplates, hidden in the bricks of the granaries. The bricks were fetched and broken up and copperplates were found within, on which was written "Jagaḍū stored this grain for the sake of the poor". The merchant then declared that it would be his sin if the people died of starvation and he gave to Vīsaladeva eight thousand Mūṭakas of grain.[66]

Now even the king was in his debt. He then returned to Bhadreshvar and sent supplies of grain to other provinces: to Hamīra, the ruler of Sind, to king Madanavarman of Avanti, to the Garjaneśa Mojadīna of Delhi, to Pratapasiṃha, king of Kāśī and to king Skandhila. He also opened almshouses and helped the people through three years of famine.

After the famine was over, Jagaḍū was visited by Vīsaladeva's minister Nāgaḍa. During this visit, a ship with horses meant for the king was shipwrecked near Bhadreshvar and only one horse reached the shore alive. Nāgaḍa claimed the horse as royal property, but Jagaḍū claimed that it was his. Accordingly, a paper covered in skin was found attached to the neck of the animal, with Jagaḍū's name on it. Here Jagaḍū made his most audacious claim, for a prerogative usually reserved for rulers. Horses were an expensive and scarce commodity and were imported at great cost from the Persian Gulf. By laying claim to the Caulukya horse, Jagaḍū was in effect making a claim to local sovereignty.

The tale ends with the death of Jagaḍū. 'When the neighbouring princes heard of his death, they all mourned for him. The king of Delhi (Garjaneśa) took off the turban from his head, Arjuna wept loudly and the king of Sindh did not touch food during two days.'

While there is no need to believe every detail of Jagaḍū's life, it demonstrates at least that in the thirteenth century it was possible for a merchant to stake a claim for political power. The Vāghelās needed the allegiance of local chiefs, some of whom were merchants. While merchants in general and Jainas in particular often took part in Gujarati politics at the Caulukya court, it was

[66] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.20, Canto VI, verses 71-90.

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usually in a subsidiary position. In the case of Jagaḍū (or at least in the possibly wishful account of his life sponsored by his descendants), a claim was made to autonomous political power in a tellingly mercantile way – by an attempt to restrict and siphon off the ruler's supply of a scarce and continually required commodity – imported horses. A canny businessman who had risen to prominence by acquiring wealth, making pious donations and conciliating the locals, could have made a kingdom for himself.

Conclusion

The history of Kacch and Saurashtra prior to the fifteenth century demonstrates a political system that was marginal even to that of eastern Gujarat. While mainland Gujarat was dominated by a network of towns interspersed by agricultural lands, the peninsula was divided amongst struggling pastoralist clans with substantial cattle wealth. The main towns in the area were the ports from which a substantial local and oceanic trade was carried out. Agriculture in the region was largely for subsistence. The overwhelming dominance of pastoralist clans in the region and the transformations of their status created a polity that had its closest parallels in Rajasthan rather than mainland Gujarat. The chief difference from the situation in Rajasthan, however, was the connection between politics and trade and the reciprocal struggle for the resources arising from trade.

Another feature of this polity and its matrix of trading and pastoralist connections, was the religious ethos. This was a region where religious affiliations were largely pragmatic and were connected with the management of often scarce resources. Both trading and pastoralist communities tended to have pragmatic affiliations to religious belief which could change or be modified to suit changing circumstances. Thus one branch of a clan may have been Śaiva, another Ismā'īlī and yet another Sunni. Equally, as in the case of the magnate Jagaḍū, Jaina religious affiliation was no barrier to building shrines for Śaivas and Ismā'īlīs.

Towards the early fifteenth century, as a stable political system began to develop in eastern Gujarat under the sultans, the pastoralist-trading world also underwent some transformation. A political and mercantile system based on alliances and customary ties gradually gave way to a more settled court-based order, with concomitant bureaucratisation and brahmanisation. Descent and genealogy rather than alliance became key factors in determining status. In the face of the overwhelming military dominance of the Gujarat sultans and their control over the trade routes for key military supplies such as arms, horses and elephants, the erstwhile pastoralist clans entered into service or tribute-paying agreements with the sultans. This

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was accompanied by the establishment of courts, the employment of immigrant brahmanas, the commissioning of Sanskritic chronicles and so on. As a result of the new status hierarchies presided over by the sultans, evidence of pastoralist religious and occupational accommodations were sought to be erased or suppressed. However, even in the late fifteenth century and indeed much later, the history of Kacch and Saurashtra represents aspects of accommodation in the politics of the frontier.

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2003 -State and Society in Gujarat c 1200-1500 (1005)

Chapter 4 **Religion, politics and patronage in a settling society**

From the tenth century, settlers moved into new territories. The expansion of Gurjara Pratihāra, and later, Caulukya dominion was accompanied by signs of their control, often including temples. These temples housed local deities who had been appropriated or modified as local versions of Śiva or the mother-goddess and in some cases as *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. In some cases, powerful guardians of local shrines were granted land and continued in their positions. Elsewhere, brahmanas were invited to settle and administer temple properties. Over most of north India, royal cults marked by sacrifice, ritual gifting and the building of signature royal temples were practised.[1] In Gujarat too, the Caulukya kings patronised Śaivism and Jainism as well as Vaiṣṇavism in a subsidiary position, each of which was associated with temple-building. Moreover, rulers were not the only ones to build temples. In fact, as will be seen below, donations for temple construction by merchants, officials, artisan groups and subsidiary clan chieftains were more common than royal constructions.

After the decline of the Caulukyas, the continuing prosperity and diversity of Gujarat attracted priests, missionaries and prophets of a variety of denominations. Some of these secured powerful patrons in the shape of merchants or chieftains, others became the custodians of shrines or places of pilgrimage, yet others became organisers of routes of pilgrimage. Religion now helped organise and perpetuate networks of distribution. The increasing importance of pilgrimage ensured that the trade routes were regularly traversed and new sites enriched by pilgrims.

Although Gujarat is now squarely associated with Vaiṣṇavism, there is little evidence for popular Vaiṣṇavism in this period. It was not patronised as the sole royal cult although various Vaiṣṇava streams, including the Bhāgavata, Kṛṣṇaite and cults of Vāmana and Varāha, did find followers and patrons intermittently. From the fifteenth century, there is evidence that Dvaraka and sites associated with Kṛṣṇa were being incorporated into a trans-regional pilgrimage cycle.[2] Kṛṣṇaite Vaiṣṇavism gradually began to find popular appeal, this time not associated with the courts but featuring *bhakti* or personal worship, particularly among merchant groups.

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[1] Ronald Inden, "The Ceremony of the Great Gift (Mahadana): Structure and Historical Context in Indian Ritual and Society," in *Asie du sud: Traditions et changements*, ed. M. Gaborieau and Alice Thorner (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1979), p. 133.

[2] F. Mallison, "The Cult of Sudama in Porbandar-Sudamapuri (II)," *Journal of the Oriental Institute* 29, no. 3-4 (1980): p.220, fn. 17.

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Ismā'īlī missionaries linked to the Fāṭimid Caliphate had long been active in western India and Sind. Later, Sunni Muslim missionaries also achieved some success in Gujarat. However, unlike with the Ismā'īlīs, there is little indication of the mode of conversion practised by Sunni missionaries or what groups they first converted. By the thirteenth century, apart from the long-established colonies of Muslim merchants in the coastal towns, there were now inland settlements in places like Anhilvada Patan, Bharuch and Junagadh.[3] According to the Veraval inscription of 1264, local Muslim communities included oil-pressers, whitewashers and other occupational groups.[4] Although large tracts of Gujarat were ruled by Muslims from the early fourteenth century, conversion to Islam did not play an important role in state policy.

While several cults and sects were loosely appropriated into state-sponsored brahmanism, others continued to shift and evolve. As pastoralist clans settled and were incorporated into military hierarchies and employment, they became part of a trans-regional armed peasantry with its own sanctified heroes and deities. Certain mother-goddesses venerated by pastoralist groups became *kul-devīs* or clan-goddesses.[5] These coexisted with other deities, heroes and preceptors, each of which played a specific role in the group's religious life. Muslim rule and the separation of political power from the temple and its attendants resulted in a diversification of the patronage of religion. Most contemporary popular cults of Gujarat can be dated to this period. Cult formation around shrines became increasingly common from the fifteenth century. The shrines themselves were symbols of settlement and the formulation of a sacral geography dotted with closely packed shrines was a symptom of the scale of settlement in Gujarat in this period. Far from stamping out religious diversity, sultanate rule in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries arguably opened up an unprecedented range of religious options, a veritable religious marketplace, as newly prosperous patrons sought legitimacy and divine assistance. It was only towards the end of the fifteenth century that dominant consolidating trends emerged out of the competing sects: Vaiṣṇavism among merchant groups, Sunni Islam among the Muslim rulers and a combination of Śaivism and mother-goddess worship among the genealogically hierarchised Rajput groups.

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[3] Desai, "13th century."

[4] *Epigraphia Indica, Arabic and Persian Supplement*, ed., Hultszch, "A Grant of Arjunadeva of Gujarat, Dated 1264 AD," p. 242f, Sircar, *Select Inscriptions II*, p. 402-08, Sircar, "Veraval Inscription of Chalukya Vaghela Arjuna, 1264 AD," p. 141ff.

[5] On *kul-devīs*, see Lindsey Harlan, *Religion and Rajput Women: The Ethic of Protection in Contemporary Narratives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), Chapter 3. Also see Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p. 32-35.

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Śaivism, brahmanas and ascetics

In common with many contemporary dynasties in north India, the Caulukyas' royal cult as indicated in their temples, epigraphs, chronicles and titles was Śaivite. They built a far greater number of Śaiva temples than those of any other denomination. While temples to other deities – Viṣṇu and his *avatāras*, Sūrya and the mother goddess – were built, these were usually either constructed by merchants or feudatories or were subsidiary temples within predominantly Śaivite temple complexes.[6] Most immigrant brahmanas also tended to favour Śaiva worship. One of the most important temples of the Caulukya period was that of Somanath, the lord of the Moon, a term for Śiva, although it appears that the cult and the temple predated the Caulukyas.[7] Caulukya patronage of this temple on the distant south-western coast of Saurashtra was an important indicator of their sovereignty in the region. However, it must be mentioned that the architectural form of the Gujarat temples did not differ according to sect, indicating that temples of all denominations were built by specialised architects.[8]

Apart from temples, there were several Śaiva sectarian monasteries for the use of ascetics. These housed both celibate and householder ascetics and, in some cases, female ascetics as well.[9] The most important Śaiva sect in this period was that of Lakulīśa-Pāśupata. Ascetics of the order became influential at the Caulukya court and were the administrators of most of the important royal temples such as those of Somanath and Anhilvada Patan.[10] Other Śaiva sects of the Caulukya period included the Kaula and Kāpālika ascetic orders, of which the latter were particularly influential among the pastoralist communities of Saurashtra.[11]

The Caulukyas engaged in widespread temple-building and offered patronage to brahmanas as priests and temple administrators. This was a period when it was vital to link the royal cult to larger north Indian networks of pilgrimage and Sanskritic legitimation. The very first Caulukya king Mūlarāja is said to have been devoted to Somanath and, improbably, to have worshipped there every week. Possibly tiring of this strenuous travelling, he built a temple of the moon-god in Anhilvada and offered the post of administering it to a senior ascetic named Kāṇṭhaḍī. As is usual with religious legitimators and the state, the Caulukyas had a contested relationship with the Śaiva ascetic orders. Although Kāṇṭhaḍī refused the job, one of his disciples

[6] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.33.
[7] On Somanāth, see Thapar, "Somanatha."
[8] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.36.
[9] Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, p.292.
[10] Ibid., p.293.
[11] Ibid., p.294.

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finally accepted on condition that he would be supplied with thirty-two women, a daily quantity of saffron, musk and camphor for his massage, a white umbrella and a grant of land.[12]

An important aspect of Śaiva religiosity at the court was animal sacrifice. Śaiva kings were regularly petitioned by their Jaina subjects to restrict animal slaughter and sacrifice. Consequently, when the Caulukyas were influenced by Jainism, the most striking difference they introduced was to give up ritual sacrifice. When Kumārapāla became a Jaina, his prohibition of animal slaughter was opposed by four sects.[13]

With the expansion of Caulukya power, local cults were incorporated into the royal idiom. After defeating a Bhīl chieftain in the region of what is now Ahmadabad, Karṇa I, on the instructions of Bhairavadevī (a consort of Śiva) built a temple to the local goddess Kocharabā. This is an example of the incorporation of local cults as junior members of the family of Śiva. Siddharāja Jayasiṃha built several Śiva temples of which the royal temple of Rudramahālaya (abode of Rudra, the fearsome form of Śiva) was most significant. Although his successor Kumārapāla was a convert to Jainism, he also built and restored several Śaiva temples.[14]

Besides the kings, feudatories and merchants also constructed Śaiva temples. A wandering Śaiva ascetic built several temples from his own earnings after having travelled to Śaiva places of pilgrimage such as Kedaranāth in the Himalayas and Rameśvaram in the south. On his arrival at Somanath he was offered the position of temple official. Interestingly, three of the five Śiva temples he built were named after important women in his life – his mother and the wives of two of his benefactors.[15] As was to become routine in Gujarat, women donors and supplicants figured prominently in inscriptions. Many Śaiva temples memorialised the names of their builders or their families: for example, Lavaṇaprasāda built the temples Ānaleśvara and Salakhaneśvara in the names of his father Ānala or Ānā and his mother Salakhanadevī.[16]

At this stage, Śaivism was manifested by temples and ascetic orders. While it is clear that these were consistently patronised by the Caulukya rulers as well as some courtiers and merchants, this does not indicate whether the sect was more widely popular as well. As is manifested by the example of Kāṇṭhaḍī and his disciple, ascetics often resisted becoming temple

[12] Ibid., p.288.
[13] Ibid., p.294, citing the play Moharājaparājaya. The four carnivorous sects were the Kaula and Kāpālika, both Śaiva sects, the Rahamāna (unidentified, but perhaps Muslims) and the Ghaṭacaṭaka (agnostics).
[14] Ibid., p.290.
[15] Ibid., p.290-291.
[16] Georg Bühler, "Eleven Land-grants of the Caulukyas of Anahilvad," *Indian Antiquary* VI (1877): p.22.

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officials and preferred to stay within their own orders.[17] Temple functionaries were generally considered lower in status and the Caulukyas had to invite brahmanas from north India to take over such duties. These included the Gauḍas who were encouraged to settle around Patan.[18]

After the establishment of sultanate rule in the early fourteenth century, temple Śaivism, which connected the Hindu king to the divine, was no longer practised overtly. In territories outside direct sultanate control, however, the new settling pastoralist polities took up the patronage of Śaivite monasteries and orders. The temple of Somanath continued to receive attention in this period and must have been kept up. An inscription of 1394-95 mentions a Parmār pastoralist worshipping at Somanath and making a donation of cows to the temple.[19] Another inscription of 1385 is dedicated to Someśa or Śiva at Somanath.[20]

Vaiṣṇavism and bhakti

Vaiṣṇavism in Gujarat is a result of the mingling of several distinct sectarian traditions at various points in time. These include the separate cults of Bhāgavata or the Vedic Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva and Baladeva, elements of which were conjoined within the Kṛṣṇaite neo-Vaiṣṇavism that became increasingly popular within Gujarat from the fifteenth century and subsequently became one of the most recognisable features of Gujarati religiosity. The synthesis of many of these traditions was first represented in a tenth century Vaiṣṇava text probably written in South India, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which became popular in Gujarat in the fifteenth century. In the light of its importance for Gujarat's subsequent history, it might be worthwhile to go over the antecedents of popular Vaiṣṇavism.

Although some of the cultic antecedents of Vaiṣṇavism were popular in Gujarat from the early Christian era, it fell out of favour as a royal cult by the tenth century. In the period of our study, Vaiṣṇavism and its component sects were not an important feature of royal cults as manifested in texts or temples of which the overwhelming majority were dedicated to Śiva. However, while the Vaiṣṇava and Kṛṣṇaite cults did not as a rule receive royal patronage, they continued to have some adherents among merchants and pastoralist groups in Gujarat throughout this period.

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[17] The lower status of temple officials was seen also in contemporary Jainism, where there was a conflict between the temple-dwelling and reforming ascetics. Dundas, *The Jains*, pp.136-37. In later Śaivism too, temple-dwelling brahmanas have had a lower or 'fallen' status. See D.F. Pocock, "The Vocation and Avocations of the Guggali Brahmans of Dvaraka," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 15 (1981): p.321.
[18] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.233.
[19] Shastri, *HIG*, p.56, Harishankar Prabhashankar Shastri, "An unpublished inscription from V.S. 1451 (A.D. 1395) of the time of the Vaja ruler Shivaraj of Prabhas," *Svadhyaya* IX, no. 2 (1972): p.228.
[20] Burgess and Cousens, *Rev. List*, p.56.

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One of the most important components of the emergent *bhakti* Vaiṣṇavism of the fifteenth century was the cult of Kṛṣṇa. The figure of Kṛṣṇa is by consensus among historians a composite one. The heroic Kṛṣṇa of the epic Mahabharata is distinct from the pastoralist deity of north-west India. 'Historians of Hinduism... agree in distinguishing the Kṛṣṇa of the epic, the Yādava prince of Dvaraka and ally of the Pandavas in their quarrel with the Kauravas, from Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla, the deified hero of the nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralist tribes which in ancient times occupied the territory of the Surasenas on both banks of the river Yamuna.'[21] The warrior-king Kṛṣṇa who appears in the Mahabharata is thus to be identified with Vāsudeva, the supreme deity of the Pancarātra or Bhāgavata sect and with the Vedic god Viṣṇu who was himself identified at a later date with Nārāyaṇa. The cowherd god Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla had little place in this synthesis and was only later incorporated into the epic Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva.

In the early Gupta period, Kṛṣṇa Gopāla was gradually incorporated into the Viṣṇu tradition as the perfect incarnation of Viṣṇu. Gupta Vaiṣṇavism was thus a mingling of Bhāgavatism with the three elements of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa and Janārdana.[22] The Bhāgavata *dharma* was founded in the Mathura region in the early historical period and is seen in Gujarat from the Gupta period.[23] The Girnar Skandagupta inscription, the only Gupta inscription in Gujarat, invokes the Vāmana *avatāra* of Viṣṇu and refers to the construction of a temple of Viṣṇu in 457 AD. The administrator Cakrapālita who built the Cakrabhṛt temple in Girnar was an ardent devotee of Govinda, i.e. Kṛṣṇa the cowherd.[24] This may be a reflection of the veneration of Kṛṣṇa as cowherd among the pastoralist groups of which Cakrapālita may to have been a member.

From the post-Gupta period, in spite of the importance of the other *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, Vaiṣṇavite devotion became predominantly Kṛṣṇaite, focussing on the tale of the cowherd-god Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla at the expense of the supposedly older epic story which became secondary. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the legend of Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla in the erotic mode became the favourite theme of *bhakti* literature. The figure of Kṛṣṇa Gopāla is itself a composite deity and has been attributed a non-Aryan origin, a 'close connection with the pastoralist tribes, the Ābhīras, Gurjaras and others' and also an affinity with pre-Aryan earth divinities, primitive fertility cults and forest, tree

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[21] C. Vaudeville, "The Cowherd God in Ancient India," in *Myths, Saints and Legends in Medieval India*, ed. Vasudha Dalmia (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.18.
[22] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.4. citing H.C. Ray Chaudhuri, *Materials for the Study of the Early History of the Vaisnava Sect* (Calcutta: 1936), p.173.
[23] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.2.
[24] Ibid., pp.3,36.

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and stream spirits.[25] In addition, early tradition would suggest that the cowherd god was a minor figure associated with the deity of the plough, Halāyudha or Balarāma.[26]

Another notable feature of Gupta Vaiṣṇavism was the worship of *avatāras*. In the gradual transformation of Bhāgavatism into Vaiṣṇavism, the doctrine of manifestations of Viṣṇu played an important role.[27] With the rise of the *avatāra* doctrine, Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa was recognised as the most perfect incarnation of Viṣṇu. Other *avatāra*s also became popular, as witnessed in the different Purāṇas and inscriptions, although no *avatāra* images from this period have been found in Gujarat.

During the rule of the Caulukyas (942-1242) the cult of Viṣṇu and its variants remained in a subsidiary position. There was not much support for Vaiṣṇavism under the Caulukyas.[28] Although the Caulukya rulers were mostly Śaivas, with some Jainas, they seem to have taken a tolerant stance to other cults. Several worshipped the consort of Viṣṇu, the goddess of wealth, Lakṣmī.[29] The worship of Lakṣmī by herself was a common feature even among non-Vaiṣṇava groups. This was particularly popular among merchant groups, including the Jainas.

Although the Caulukya rulers were not Vaiṣṇavas, several of their officials and important merchants were. The Navasari inscription of Karṇadeva I's feudatory and the Dohad inscription from the reign of Siddharāja (1140 AD) begin with an invocation to Vāsudeva and the Varāha (Boar) *avatāra*. In Kumārapāla's time too, some grants were given to Vaiṣṇavas although he was a Śaiva with a partiality for the Jainas.[30] In the reign of Bhīma II (1178-1242), a courtier built two Viṣṇu temples in Somanath.[31]

This continued during the period of their successors, the Vāghelā family of Dholka. Although Vīradhavala Vāghelā built a Vīranārāyaṇa temple in 1238, his feudatory also made Nārāyaṇa temples.[32] From the fourteenth century, there was a great proliferation of rulers and patrons in Gujarat. Several inscriptions from wells, memorial slabs and temples in the fourteenth century mention Viṣṇu. The 1499 inscription of Adalaj, set up by Rūḍādevī, the wife of a

[25] Vaudeville, "Cowherd," p.19.
[26] Ibid., p.26.
[27] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.4.
[28] For summary, see Ibid., p.174.
[29] Ibid., p.9.
[30] Ibid., p.10.
[31] G. S. Ojha and Georg Bühler, eds., *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. I, II, vol.II, p.439.
[32] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.10.

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Vāghelā chieftain, indicates that he followed the Bhāgavata *dharma* and images of Viṣṇu are found in the niches of the well.[33]

Thus the Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla cult became obscure in north-western India (where it arose) from the end of the Gupta period. Meanwhile, the cults of Śiva, Sūrya and later Viṣṇu made advances and found patrons among a range of new and aspirant rulers, the former upto the borders of Bengal and Orissa. The cowherd god then reappeared in the South and Bengal around the twelfth century and was re-introduced to north India with the help of texts such as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* from the fifteenth century.[34] Although the legend of Kṛṣṇa Gopāla arose among the pastoralist groups of the north Indian plains, it was in the south that the legend was assimilated into emergent Vaiṣṇava *bhakti*.

In Gujarat, Nṛsimharāṇyamuni composed *Viṣṇubhakti-candrodaya* (1416). The last leaf of a copy from Talaja states that it was prepared when when Malik Sri Usmān and Rāol Śrī Sārangajī were in power in Ghogha. It was recommended that it should be protected from oil, water, loose binding and falling into strange hands.[35] In Girnar, an inscription of 1417 commences with a prayer to Damodara, the stealer of butter.[36] The turn towards Vaiṣṇavism and the translation of Puranic stories into the vernacular reached its height with Bhālaṇ in the late fifteenth century who translated numerous *akhyāna*s from the Puraṇas.[37] His chief claim to fame lay in composing a *rāsa* based on Bāna's Kādambari. Thus it is in this period that we find the popularisation of Kṛṣṇa stories such as *Rukmiṇi-haraṇ*, *Satyabhāmā vivāha*, *Kṛṣṇa Bālacarita* adapted from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa by Bhālan. Bhālan invented the free use of *garbi*, the Vaiṣṇava poetic form in Gujarat, that was later emulated by several Gujarati poets. There were also other poets such as Kesava Hṛdayarāma, a Kāyastha from Patan and Bhīma, a Moḍha brahmana from Siddhpur, who translated into Gujarati cantos from the Bhāgavata and other Vaiṣṇava works in Sanskrit.[38]

In Gujarat, the transition to Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* seems to have happened in some important instances at the expense of Śaivism. This would bear out N.A. Thoothi's observation that in

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[33] J. Kirste, "Inscriptions from Northern Gujarat," *Epigraphia Indica* II (1892), Shastri, *HIG*, p.43.
[34] Vaudeville, "Cowherd," p.32.
[35] P. Peterson, *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions* (Bhavnagar: Bhavnagar Archaeological Department, 1905), p.11.
[36] K.M. Munshi, *Gujarata and its literature, a survey from the earliest times* (London, New York: Longmans, Green & Co, 1935), p.116.
[37] Ibid., p.122.
[38] Ibid., p.123.

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Gujarat, Vaiṣṇavism has 'grown out of the struggle to supplant Saivism'[39] This was also true of the rise of Vaiṣṇavism in other South Asian regions, for example in Orissa.[40] Even in the Dvaraka region, the only place where Vaiṣṇava shrines are in a majority, most of the shrines belong to the period of Vaiṣṇavite revivalism from the sixteenth century.[41] Many of these, such as the town of Dvaraka itself, were sacred sites earlier, but were not necessarily Vaiṣṇava. Dvaraka was an important site from about the seventh century and was one of the four *pīṭhas* of Ādi Sankarācārya but the Kṛṣṇaite temple there belongs to the sixteenth century.[42] It is significant that in some of them, such as the temple of Kṛṣṇa as Raṇachoḍa in Dakor (built in 1556), the narrative of the installation of the icon indicates that the site was formerly a Śaivite shrine. The story of shifting the image of Dvārakadhiśa (Raṇachoḍajī) from Dvaraka to Dankapur reconciles the original Śaiva shrine with the new image. Dankarsī, the builder of the temple, propitiated Śiva and persuaded him to stay there permanently. Śiva then made Kṛṣṇa promise that he would also stay there forever.[43] The story also relates that the image of Kṛṣṇa was brought to Dakor four hundred years previously, but had to be hidden by his devotees until, presumably, it was safe to install it in the formerly Śaiva temple. This is an indication that while variants of Kṛṣṇaite belief may have existed prior to the building of important shrines, they did not usually find favour and patronage before the sixteenth century.

Again, the history of the Śāmalājī (dark or black, purportedly referring to Kṛṣṇa's complexion) image in Sabarkantha district indicates a Śaiva background to an important Kṛṣṇaite site of pilgrimage popularised from the sixteenth century.[44] Śiva permitted Brahma to do a *yajña* here. 'At the beginning of the *yajña*, Śrī Gadādhara Viṣṇu appeared before Brahma in a dark (Syamala or Śāmala) form and at the request of Brahma, Gadādhara Viṣṇu stayed in Karambuka kṣetra.'[45] Thus the worship of Viṣṇu was facilitated by the benediction of Śiva who allowed Brahma to conduct the sacrifice in the first place.

The tension between Śaivism and emergent Vaiṣṇavism is also seen in the life of the poet Bhālan who began life as a Śaivite but later seems to have transferred his allegiance to the

[39] N.M. Thoothi, *The Vaishnavas of Gujarat: being a study in methods of investigation of social phenomena* (Calcutta, London: Longmans, Green, 1935), p.67.
[40] See for example, Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke, and Gaya Charan Tripathi, eds., *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978).
[41] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.27.
[42] Ibid., p.31.
[43] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.202.
[44] Ramanlal Soni, "Sri Gadadhara Mahatmya ma thi," in *Samalaji* (1953), p.32.
[45] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.35.

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2003 -State and Society in Gujarat c 1200-1500 (1005)

Vaiṣṇava Ramanandi sect.[46] Despite the rise of Vaiṣṇavism in the fifteenth century, the emphasis on Śaivite motifs in a text like the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* indicates that that Śaivism was still invoked in certain contexts, most notably the martial. By the mid-fifteenth century, a Vaiṣṇava theme entered some texts that did not have a specifically sectarian orientation. The *Kānhaḍade Prabandha*, written c.1456 in sultanate-controlled Jalor, recalls for his descendants the heroic story of the Cauhan hero Kānhaḍade and his battles against the armies of 'Alā al-Dīn Khaljī in the late thirteenth century. The brahmana poet Padmanābha dedicated his account to Vasudeva although his own devotion, expressed later in the text, was to the Śaivite shrine of Somanath. However, Gujarat was already seen as a land of Vaiṣṇavism:

> 'Where Saligrama was worshipped and Hari's name was recited, where *yajnas* were performed and charities (*tyaga*) given to the Brahmanas, where Tulsi plant and Pipal tree were worshipped and Vedas and Puranas were studied and recited to comprehend *dharma*, where everyone went on pilgrimages and respected Smritis, Puranas and cow, in such a country (*desa*) Madhava brought the Mlechchha! No wonder, in all the nine continents (*Khanda*), he earned ill repute.'[47]

When 'Alā al-Dīn's armies reached Somanath, the local chieftains – Vālā, Vājā, Jeṭhavā and Cuḍāsamā – offered a united defence while 'the Khan's horsemen subjected the town to pillaging reminiscent of the sack of Lanka!'[48] In another episode, Kānhaḍade refused to pay obeisance to the sultan's general. His envoy declared: 'O Khan! Listen carefully. Our Lord's salam is only for one, the Creator of the Universe, high above there. He bows his head to Narayana only and before none else; as for you, do not hope for salam from Kanhadade. Even if fire turns cool and sun may rise in the West, Kanhadade will not bow his head before any one except Narayana.'[49]

This Vaiṣṇava orientation did not prevent Kānhaḍade from rescuing the Somanath idol from the marauding army and worshipping it:

> At Jalor, Kanhadade now worshipped Lord Somanatha, daily bathing the idol with panchamrita, performing all the sixteen rituals, and adorning the idol with sandal paste, flowers, tilaka etc. There were ever new ceremonies and rites in worshipping Lord Somanatha. All the people prayed with devotion and bowed before the God.[50]

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[46] Munshi, *Literature*, p.119.
[47] Padmanābha, *Kānhaḍade Prabandha (India's greatest patriotic saga of medieval times)*, trans. V. S. Bhatnagar (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1991), p.2.
[48] Ibid., verse 86, p.9.
[49] Ibid., verse 142-3, p.15.
[50] Ibid., verses 251-2, p.28.

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In yet another episode, the Śaivite emphasis returns in an unexpected form. The sultan had now conquered all other territories but Jalor remained a thorn in his side. He marched towards Jalor, first encountering Kānhaḍade's kinsman Satala. The latter called upon his family deity Āśāpurī to help him defeat the enemy. In reply, the goddess granted him a tour of the sultan's army: 'Asapuri took Satala's arm and led him around the camp. The king (Alauddin) was fast asleep and appeared to Satala in the form of Siva with 3 eyes, 5 faces, matted hair, skull chaplet, alms bowl and other features. Satala was wonderstruck and bowed reverently.'[51] In this vision, the *mleccha* enemy appears in the form of Śiva-Rudra! A Vaiṣṇava pastoralist chieftain and devotee of Āśāpurī is thus pitted against the enemy as a manifestation of Śiva, throwing him into a quandary: 'Sultan has appeared in the form of Rudra! How can I strike a blow at him?'[52] This is also the point at which the poet declares his own affiliations: 'Satala had seen the Lord of the poet Padmanabha.'[53]

The popularisation of Vaiṣṇavism came from the south with Rāmānuja (twelfth century) and Madhvācārya (thirteenth century). They were amongst the earliest propagandists to use the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and mystical ideas of abandonment to Kṛṣṇa based on the erotic aspect of the deity as the basis of *bhakti*.[54] It is likely that Gujarat was exposed to this form of neo-Vaiṣṇavism quite early. The first inscription of Kṛṣṇa worship, dated 1291, is from the reign of Sārangadeva Vāghelā (1274-1296) and records an instance of the communal worship of Kṛṣṇa at Palanpur. There is a detailed description of the offerings and theatricals for the worship of Kṛṣṇa.[55] However, *bhakti* Vaiṣṇavism does not seem to have taken on a popular form before the fifteenth century. Although there are several references to the practice of Vaiṣṇavism before the fifteenth century, this is when it began to become a popular and expanding sect in Gujarat. In the stories associated with the Vaiṣṇava poet of Saurashtra, Narsiṃha Mahetā, it is also clear that neo-Vaiṣṇavism was now beginning to attract merchant patrons. In the mid-fifteenth century, Narsiṃha Mahetā was in all probability drawing upon the older cultic form of the local deity along with elements of the revivalist neo-Vaiṣṇavism introduced from south India by Madhvācārya and Rāmānuja.

In Gujarat, the cult of Kṛṣṇa is associated primarily with the region of Dvaraka in the north-west of peninsular Gujarat. The legend recalls that a branch of Kṛṣṇa's clan, the Yādavas,

[51] Ibid., verses 132-135, pp.41-2.
[52] Ibid., verse 138, p.43.
[53] Ibid., verse 135, p.42.
[54] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.212-3.
[55] D.R. Bhandarkar, "Anavada Stone Inscription of Sarangadeva, V.S. 1348 (1291 A.D.)," *Indian Antiquary* XLI (1912): p.21.

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migrated from Mathura to Dvaraka but their supremacy was brought to an end after disastrous infighting. The final feud took place in the region of Prabhasa and Kṛṣṇa was killed by a hunter between Veraval and Prabhas Patan. According to Herman Goetz, the sites of Mathura and Dvaraka, where the mythological Kṛṣṇa lived most of his life, do not seem to have been incorporated into networks of pilgrimage until the fifteenth century.[56] Thus while the site of Dvaraka may have been significant for the cult of the cowherd god, he remained a local deity without pan-Indian significance. The influence of neo-Vaiṣṇava texts and propaganda did not immediately lead to the incorporation of Dvaraka in the pilgrimage network. This took off only after the proselytising tours undertaken by Vallabhācārya in the first decade of the sixteenth century.

The visit of Vallabhācārya (1479-1532) to Gujarat in the early in the early sixteenth century was immensely significant. He had remarkable success in converting several sections of people in Gujarat to his fold. He travelled to Siddhpur where he encountered orthodox Śaivas, Patan, a Jaina stronghold, Vadnagar and Visnagar – the base for the influential Nāgar brahmanas – followers of Śankara's monism – and Bharuch where the Bhṛgu brahmanas questioned him on distinction between Hari and Hara, i.e., Viṣṇu and Śiva. He is said to have had success in all these places. Vallabhācārya is also claimed to have had Muslim devotees and impressed Sikandar Lodī and Maḥmūd Begaḍā.[57] He established eighty four *baiṭhak*s – seats – all over India, of which some were in Gujarat. This is the chief Vaiṣṇava movement with relevance for modern Gujarat.

Narsiṃha Mahetā predated the spread of the Vallabha movement in Gujarat. His vocabulary came from a combination of the local cultic tradition, prevalent Jaina concepts of individual worship and congregational devotion and only latterly from the text-based brahmanical neo-Vaiṣṇavism from the south. It is significant that neo-Vaiṣṇavism in Gujarat tended largely to be non-brahmanical or even anti-brahmanical. There is little evidence in Gujarat of brahmanas introducing it or engaging in its proselytisation. While Narsiṃha Mahetā was a brahmana, he belonged to the Nāgar denomination that did not take up priestly or ritual duties and in fact is comparable to scribal communities such as the Kāyasthas in north India.[58] Even at this stage, stories about Narsiṃha's battles with the Śaiva priesthood in Junagadh form the mainstay of his quasi-martyrology. More interestingly, the Nāgars are known to be Śaivas and Narsiṃha's own

[56] Vaudeville, "Cowherd," p.31, fn. 18.
[57] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.22.
[58] Françoise Mallison, *Au point du jour: les Prabhatiyam de Narasimha Maheta poete et saint vishnouite du Gujarat (Xve siecle)* (Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient, 1986), p.24, C.R. Naik, "Cultivation of the Persian Language and Literature by the Nagaras of Gujarat," *Journal of the Oriental Institute* 14 (1964): p.125-6.

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name is redolent of a Viṣṇu *avatāra* with definite Śaiva colouring. Thus the corpus of Narsiṃha stories demonstrates the same ambiguous and oppositional relationship between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism that is apparent from Tulsidas's career in North India. Gujarati neo-Vaiṣṇavism was adopted largely by traders and peasants (and by groups making a transition from agriculture to trade) and in some cases by women from Rajput communities (for example Mirā). The only function for brahmanas in this Vaiṣṇavism was as temple priests – the so-called degraded brahmanas of Dvaraka and Dakor.[59]

Interestingly, the pastoralist groups who gave rise to the idea of Kṛṣṇa and who claimed descent in his line did not generally adopt the new Vaiṣṇavism. The Cuḍāsamās, for example, claimed to belong to Kṛṣṇa's Yādava clan in their inscriptions and texts but were opposed to the neo-Vaiṣṇavism of figures such as Narsiṃha Mahetā.[60] Several other Rajputising groups similarly associated their lineage with Kṛṣṇa without adopting him as the clan deity.

Jainism and trade

In the twelfth century, several Jainas acquired powerful positions at the court of Siddharāja Jayasiṃha (1094-1143) and his successor Kumārapāla (1143-1174). These included the scholar and historian Hemacandra, the most important synthesiser of Śvetāmbara doctrine and practice who was appointed by the Śaiva ruler Siddharāja as his court scholar. Hemacandra formed an even closer relationship with Siddharāja's nephew and successor Kumārapāla who actually converted to Jainism and surrounded himself with prominent Jainas, although he may have reverted to the Hindu fold later in his life.[61] Although Jaina influence over the rulers ended with the death of Kumārapāla – his descendants were Śaivas, some aggressively so – the Jainas continued to be a powerful and prosperous group who could not be ignored by rulers.

The surviving accounts of Kumārapāla's reign are marked by a curious tension since the two major chroniclers, Hemacandra and, later, Merutunga, both Jainas, wished to emphasise Kumārapāla's conversion to Jainism and hence his adherence to non-violence. An attempt is thus made to make out the wars of his reign as purely defensive. An incident related by both the chroniclers demonstrates how this tension worked: Once Kumārapāla was appointed head of the congregation of Jainas and was about to start on pilgrimage, when news came of the impending invasion of Dāhala. Full of fear, Kumārapāla consulted Hemacandra who assured him that the

[59] Pocock, "Guggali."
[60] Mallison, *Prabhatiyam*, p.45. Narsiṃha's chief opponent was not the sultan of Ahmadabad but the local ruler, Māṇḍalik, who claimed descent from Kṛṣṇa.
[61] Dundas, *The Jains*, p.135.

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gods of Jainism would look after him and that Dāhala would die before he could attack, which is what transpired. This episode was evidently related to demonstrate that '...by accepting non-violence, the king did not become weak and that the presiding deities of Jainism protected him by removing his enemies from the world', since obviously, the king could not avoid fighting, even if only in self-defence.[62] Of course, whether Kumārapāla was truly a Jaina or not, he engaged in plenty of warfare in his time, some of which was related without defensiveness by his Jaina chroniclers too. Thus we have several ideological statements of Jaina kingship from this period – the only ones formulated when Jaina rulers or ones heavily influenced by Jainism were actually in power. One of their important arguments was against ritual sacrifice.[63] However, the Caulukya kingdom was closely linked to Śaiva manifestations of religiosity and the Jaina-influenced control of slaughter during Kumārapāla's period did not persist under his successors.

The prevalence of Jainism was remarked upon by many of the travellers to Gujarat. They were especially struck by the Jainas' reverence for animal life. Marco Polo, in the thirteenth century, was fascinated by the Jainas: 'They could not kill an animal on any account, not even a fly or a flea or a louse or anything in fact that has life; for they say, these all have souls and it would be a sin to do so; for the same reasons they ate no vegetables in a green state and spread their food only on dry leaves.'[64] Idrīsī remarked in the eleventh century upon the concern generally shown by the inhabitants of Nahrwāla for cattle: 'When their animals are enfeebled by age and are unable to walk, they free them from all labour and provide them with food without exacting any return.'[65] The Jaina insistence on vegetarianism and non-violence meant that their main converts and adherents were to be found among the merchant groups. One major set of converts were the Śrīmālī *vāṇiās* or merchants who were attracted to settle in Gujarat in large numbers from southern Rajasthan, possibly from the eleventh century onwards. The Śrīmālīs, a successful trading group, contributed ascetics as well as a lay community to Śvetāmbara Jainism and fanned out over many parts of Gujarat. Resistance to animal sacrifice became a feature of merchant intervention in politics and was later upheld by revivalist Vaiṣṇavas too. Later, in an inscription of 1451, the Cuḍāsamā ruler Māṇḍalik decreed at his coronation that animal killing would be prohibited on several days of the month on the request of the (Jaina or Vaiṣṇava) trader

[62] Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, p.116.
[63] Toshikazu Arai, "Jaina kingship in the *Prabandhacintamani*," in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. J.F. Richards (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.113.
[64] Marco Polo, *The travels of Marco Polo*, trans. Henry Yule (New York: Dover, 1993).
[65] Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, p.27.

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Hāsā of Stambhatīrtha and others.[66] This is another example of an occasion when cooperation with merchants actually caused changes to imperial rituals.

A prominent Jaina figure close to the centre of power was the merchant Vastupāla, (minister and strategist to the Vāghelā clan who succeeded the Caulukyas in most of their territories by about 1200) who was responsible for several military victories in spite of his Jaina affiliation. This martial spirit was even celebrated by one of his biographers: 'Thy sword, illustrious Vastupāla, beautiful in rising and brandishing, valiant in deed, defeated in the world that Sangrāmasiṃha (Śankha).'[67] Along with his brother Tejahpāla, he became renowned as a great philanthropist and builder in the first half of the thirteenth century. The Vāghelā territories were by now greatly shrunk and beleagured by attacks from all directions. Vastupāla, however, stuck by his patrons, all the while carrying out a flourishing trade, the proceeds of which he invested in large-scale building of Jaina edifices – temples, wells, hospitals and rest-houses – at Girnar, Abu, Cambay and several other places. Another wealthy Jaina businessman who surfaced into Vāghelā politics was Jagaḍū, the Śrīmālī merchant from Bhadreshvar in Kacch who, as seen in Chapter 3, had intercepted the vital horse-import trade from the Persian Gulf to Anhilvada in a bid for local power. His biography commissioned by his descendants provides a graphic account of a provincial merchant's negotiations and often dubious dealings, all justified by his philanthropy during a famine in 1256-58 and his lavishness in supporting Jaina and other religious institutions.

Pilgrimage was a theme that recurs in most medieval Jaina chronicles. While there was no scriptural requirement for lay Jainas to engage in pilgrimage, it was nevertheless seen as a merit-granting activity. Lay people usually travelled in groups to the chief temples such as those of Abu, Shatrunjaya and Girnar. Making donations to temples was also a meritorious activity, as was giving in other forms, such as in the donation of food to wandering ascetics. While it was acceptable for lay people to make money, wealth could generate merit for the individual only if it was donated towards religious building or upkeep, financing religious activities or the care of animals. Moreover, the merchant was required to be financially stable and creditworthy, free from ostentation, temperate and vegetarian and actively philanthropic towards his sect. Jaina merchants continued to build and renovate community structures throughout the thirteenth century. In 1299 came the invasion of Ulugh Khān and Nuṣrat Khān, the generals of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī. While sultanate rule of Gujarat was being established, there were several more campaigns in Gujarat.

[66] Diskalkar, *IK*, no. 76, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 78.
[67] Majumdar, *Chaulukyas*, p.324.;E.K. Burgess and James Burgess, "Translation of Arisimha's Sukritasankirtana (VS 1285)," *Indian Antiquary* XXXI (1902).

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During one of them, in 1312-13, Turkish troops destroyed or desecrated some of the temples of the religious complex in Shatrunjaya. This caused widespread resentment in the Jaina community until a rich Patan merchant, Samrā Śāh, undertook to carry out repairs. He applied to and received permission to do so from the governor Alp Khān who also, in a conciliatory gesture, gave him a casket of jewels to help with the costs.[68]

During sultanate rule, Jainas generally remained on cordial terms with the rulers. We do not come across further accounts of the desecration of Jaina temples and several inscriptions attest to the fact that temples within sultanate territories were still being endowed and renovated.[69] In 1328, a Śvetāmbara scholar, Jinaprabha Sūrī went to Delhi to meet Muḥammad b. Tughluq and by his own account was received cordially. He and his successor Jinadeva Sūrī also extracted an undertaking that the Śvetāmbaras and their shrines would henceforth be protected from further harm.[70] In many parts of Gujarat too, Jainas seem to have been free to practice their faith and engage in business, although names of prominent Jainas in the administration are few and far between. The production and patronage of Jaina literary texts also continued throughout the sultanate period. The Śrīmālī Jaina community had, by this time, acquired considerable importance in Gujarat and beyond. One of their skills was in the handling of currency. Several important mint-masters were Śrīmālī Jainas, including the master of the Delhi sultanate mint, Ṭhakkura Pheru, the author of the first numismatic manual, the *Dravyaparīkṣa*.[71] Similarly, the mints in Gujarat were often handled by Śrīmālī Jaina merchants.

However merchants were not the only converts, nor were merchant groups the only target of proselytising activity by Jainas. The present merchant-dominated composition of the community has led scholars to believe that was always the case, but certain pastoralist and peasant groups also seem to have been influenced by Jainism in the period of our concern.[72] In

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[68] Dalal, ed., *PGKS,* Misra, *Rise*, pp.68-69, citing Samrā Rāsu and Nābhinandana-jinoddhāra prabandha written by Kakkasuri of the Ukeśagaccha (1336).

[69] For example, the inscription of Śāh Jesal from Cambay in 1309 to mark the building of a temple and hospital during the reign of Alp Khān in Gujarat. Jinavijayaji, *PJLS*, 2, p.447, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 1, p.3. Or the inscription of 1345 from Himmatnagar in north Gujarat, recording the installation of an image. K. G. Krishnan, ed., *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1976-77* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1987), App B, no. 58.

[70] Lalchandra Bhagwan Gandhi, *Jinaprabha-suri ane Sultan Muhammad Tughluq* (Lohawat-Mevad: Sri Jinahari Sagar Suri Jnana Bhandar, 1939).

[71] Deyell, *Living without Silver*, p.247, Khare, "Dravyapariksha of Thakkura Pheru - A Study," p.25.

[72] The *Bombay Gazetteer* reports only one group of Jaina cultivators in Gujarat – the Panca Osvāls of Kacch – in the ninteenth century.Campbell and Kirparam, eds., *Hindus*, p.99. There is more evidence of lower-caste or peasant affiliation to Jainism from Panjab where an administrator remarked on a low-caste Jaini or Saraogi sect who worship Parśvanātha and have a reverence for animal life. He also remarked on intermarriage between the pastoralist Bisnis (Biśnoīs in Rajasthan) and the Saraogis. J. Wilson, *Final Report on the Revision of Settlement of the Sirsa District in the Punjab* (Lahore: 1879-83), p.101, 139.

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some cases, pastoralist groups in the process of sedentarising and engaging in trade were influenced by Jaina teachers. The Rabārīs of southern Rajasthan, for example, retain a reverence for the Dādās or teachers of the Kharatara *gaccha*. In modern times, some Rabārī elders also became Jaina renouncers, a practice that may date back to early contacts with Jaina missionaries.[73] Another example of this process is the conversion of the Osvāls, inhabitants of the region of Osian in southern Rajasthan. The Osvāls were part of a wide range of settling pastoralist groups all over western India who were eventually assimilated at various levels into an emerging Rajput hierarchy. The Osvāls claim kinship with the Paramārs and more specifically with the Caulukyas (Solankis). The story goes that the Osvāls were Solanki Rajputs who converted to Jainism after their chief's son recovered from snakebite.[74] In common with other pastoralist groups, they were adherents of a mother goddess, Sacciyā or Saccikā Mātā, a meat-eating goddess who demanded blood sacrifice. Sacciyā Mātā engaged in an epic struggle with a Jaina teacher who finally subdued her and accepted her as a disciple along with the rest of the Osvāls.[75] Sacciya Mata is probably a version of Sancair Mātā, the *kuldevī* bestowed by legend upon the Paramaras during the Agnikula sacrifice at Mount Abu.[76]

Sacciyā Mātā remained the guardian deity of the Osvāls even after they accepted Jainism and the story is constantly reinvoked to underline the transformation of prior practice into Jaina ritual.[77] Expanding Jainism similarly incorporated several other goddesses and guardians into its fold, some of whom were converted from their violent habits to become docile followers of the teacher. One tale relates how a recently converted layman was harrassed by a goddess he had formerly revered to revert to his former faith. The layman stood fast and refused to do as she asked. Impressed by his resolve, the goddess asked him to show her a little respect. He agreed to do so if she would stand below the image of the *tīrthankara* in the temple.[78] Jainas also worshipped and constructed icons of pan-Indian goddesses such as Sarasvati and Lakṣmī.

While Śvetāmbaras had become the dominant sect in Gujarat since the council of Valabhi in the fifth century, Digambaras continued to live and find adherents in Gujarat until the twelfth century. An adversarial moment came in 1125 when the Śvetāmbara Vādideva and the Digambara Kumudacandra debated at the court of Siddharāja Jayasiṃha. One of the important issues at stake was whether women could attain *mokṣa* without first being reborn as men. The

[73] Vinay Kumar Srivastava, *Religious Renunciation of a Pastoral People* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.65.
[74] Campbell and Kirparam, eds., *Hindus*, vol.II, p.496.
[75] U.P. Shah, *Sculptures from Samlaji and Roda* (Baroda: 1960), p.76.
[76] Campbell and Kirparam, eds., *Hindus*, vol.II, p.485.
[77] Dundas, *The Jains*, p.215.
[78] Ibid., p.212.

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Digambaras maintained that the perfect ascetic must conquer the emotions and be indifferent to worldly thoughts to the extent that clothes were irrelevant, whereas the Śvetāmbaras permitted the wearing of white garments for their renouncers. In addition, the stipulation on nakedness meant that women were barred from becoming renouncers in the Digambara order. The debate ended in victory for the Śvetāmbaras and the Digambaras were obliged to migrate to the south. Although the debate was projected as being a ritual or doctrinal one, there may have been an underlying political flavour too.[79] Kumudacandra was from Karnataka, as was Siddharāja's wife, and this may have been a manifestation of a struggle between local Śvetāmbara interests against 'foreign' Digambara ones.

From about the eleventh century, the Śvetāmbara hierarchy in Gujarat was further divided into ascetic lineages or *gacchas*, each of which was led by a charismatic teacher and was supported by a lay community, usually of Hindu converts. The theme of the contest between the travelling teacher-missionary and local religious authorities, resolved when the missionary displays superior magical powers and induces the locals to accept his guidance is a common one in medieval Gujarat. In Bhadreshvar, for example, evidently a Śaiva stronghold, a Jaina preacher was confronted by a Śaiva yogi who began an argument with him. While the debate was going on, the yogi caused a poisonous snake to bite Śrīṣeṇa, the Jaina teacher. He used his powers of meditation to draw out the poison, a miracle which caused the yogi to sing his praises.[80] There were also contests over particular sites. A Jaina minister who wished to build a temple at Abu was rebuffed by the Hindu authorities of the region and proved his claim only when an image of Ṛṣabha was miraculously discovered there. This was not enough for the Hindus who only permitted him to acquire the land he needed after he covered it with gold coins. Miraculous legitimacy sometimes had to be backed by hard cash.[81]

The chief of the *gacchas* in our period were the Kharatara *gaccha* and the Tapā *gaccha*, both image-worshipping sects that became very significant subsequently. The Tapā gaccha, later to become the most popular Śvetāmbara sect, was founded in 1228, its founder similarly rejecting 'laxness' of practice in the community. There were other *gacchas* too, as well as subdivisions of the Kharatara and Tapā *gacchas*, many of which generated considerable debate around ritual prescriptions or questions of legitimacy.

The Kharatara *gaccha* arose out of the disgust felt by its founder for the corrupt practices of temple-dwelling monks. Its most prominent teacher was Jinadatta Sūrī (1075-1154) who

[79] Ibid., p.51-52.
[80] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.21.
[81] Dundas, *The Jains*, p.221.

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became an energetic propagandist for the *gaccha*, even travelling to Muslim-dominated Sind in search of converts. Corruption in temples was a theme that preoccupied Śvetāmbara systematisers in the medieval period. There were numerous debates around the questions of the validity of temples and of the duty of monks to supervise them. It had become a great marker of prestige and piety for a Jaina lay person to build or make a donation to a temple. As a result a large number of temples were built, most of which were tended by appointed monks, much in the manner of the brahmana guardians of Hindu temples. Some Jainas were infuriated by what they saw as the corrupt practices of the Jaina temple-monks who had given up the prescribed detachment and wandering ascetism in favour of life at temples complete with rituals involving music and dancing-girls and the use of garlands, fine clothes, betel-nut and lac to paint their hands and feet.[82] One argument, however, defended the temple-dwelling monks for preserving the temples which were neglected by kings and the laity, thus keeping the faith alive. Although the sources would lead one to believe that temple-dwelling monks were regularly worsted in public debate, it is more likely that there was a pragmatic acceptance of the need for certain monks to manage the sacred places while others, possibly the majority, maintained a wandering existence.

Another sect that evolved from the Śvetāmbara fold in the fifteenth century was that started by a wealthy layman, Lonkā Śāh. This breakaway and short-lived faction argued against image worship and in fact rejected temples altogether. It has been suggested that Lonkā, who lived in the sultanate capital of Ahmadabad and was acquainted with Muslims at the court, was influenced by Muslim aniconic arguments to reject images.[83] Aniconicity, however, also has a scriptural base within the Jaina doctrine itself, thus Lonkā may have merely been recommending a return to the fundamantals.[84]

While Islamic ideas may not have had a direct influence on the Jainas, there was a substratum of cult practices in this period that shared some of their principles. The mid-sixteenth century author Surabhaṭṭa – not a Jaina but a brahmana – listed the degenerate practices of the Kalī age. Many of these were reminiscent of Jaina prohibitions: 'People will take their meals at night (i.e. instead of before sunset) and will use water without straining it.' He also opposed the cultivation of indigo, whose manufacture involves the death of tiny beings, the use of kilns for

[82] Ibid., p.136-138.
[83] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.208. See also Peter Flügel, "Protestant und Post-Protestantische Jaina Reformbewegungen: Zur Geschichte und Organisation der Sthanakvasi I," *Berliner Indologische Studien* 13-14, 15 (2000).
[84] Dundas, *The Jains*, p.249.

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preparing mortar and the felling of trees to supply timber for building houses. These are also similar to prescriptions followed by Ismā'īlī-influenced sects such as the Biśnoīs in Rajasthan.[85]

As Paul Dundas argues, it will only be possible to get a sense of Jaina history if 'a wider range of source materials such as stories, legends, *belles-lettres*, clan and sectarian traditions, hagiographies and so on' are used in addition to the information from inscriptions and chronicles.[86] Thus, it might be worthwhile to examine more closely the biography of a prominent Śrīmālī Jaina merchant-prince in Kacch who lived in the thirteenth century. The *Jagaḍūcarita* is a tale that illuminates several aspects of the relationship between Jainas and trade, the question of individual wealth, the duty of philanthropy, the constraints of the faith, ethics and the lack of them in trade.[87] It also illuminates the complex relationship between trade and religious patronage in this period. The narrative consists of linked episodes from the life of Jagaḍū, most of which are intended to explain and celebrate his life as an exemplary philanthropist.

Jagaḍū's initial wealth, which enabled him to fulfil the religious duty of philanthropy, was obtained through the exploitation of some resource that pertained to livestock:

> Once, while he was taking a walk near the town, he saw a shepherd tending his goats. In the herd he remarked a beautiful she-goat, from whose neck hung a Mani, i.e., either a fleshy excrescence, such as goats usually have, or more probably an amulet. Recognising that the Mani was one that would grant prosperity, he purchased the goat from the shepherd for a small sum. Jagadu took the goat home, took the Mani from its neck and worshipped it secretly, after which his riches increased greatly.

As Jainas are prohibited from killing animals or profiting from their slaughter, this instance and its retrospective justification may be an indication that Jagaḍū's *mani* was actually a means of profiting from livestock. This is the first instance in the text of Jagaḍū's indulging in practices that are less than praiseworthy, but as they lead to an increase in his wealth and the expression of his proclivity for generosity, are narrated without censure.

Another account of Jagaḍū's life similarly finds him profiting from the sale of beeswax, a forbidden substance for Jainas.[88] The ethics of trade came up in another incident too. Jayantasiṃha, one of Jagaḍū's servants, sailed to the Persian Gulf with a load of merchandise to trade there. On arriving, his attention was drawn to a large stone lying on the shore and he ordered his servants to take possession of it. Meanwhile, the captain of a Turuṣka (Turk/Muslim)

[85] Dr. Krishnaram Bishnoi, *Guru Jambheshvar: Vividh Ayam* (Delhi: BR Publishers Co., 1996), p.21, Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p.65.
[86] Dundas, *The Jains*, p.113.
[87] Bühler, ed., *Jagaducharita*, p.33.
[88] Hemacandra argues that those who eat honey are worse than butchers. Dundas, *The Jains*, p.177.

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vessel from Cambay also noticed the stone and similarly ordered his men to remove it to his ship.[89] When Jayantasiṃha stopped him, the Turuṣka declared that the stone would belong to he who paid a thousand *dināra*s to the lord of the town. The two attempted to outbid each other for the possession of the stone and finally Jayantasiṃha paid out three lakh *dināra*s, placed the stone in his ship and returned to Bhadreshvar. He delivered the stone to Jagaḍū, confessing that he had lost much money in trying to preserve his master's honour. Unexpectedly, Jagaḍū was delighted and thanked him for upholding his honour even in a foreign land.

Jagaḍū was eventually rewarded for the mysterious stone when a Śaivite yogi revealed that it was filled with jewels.[90] This indicated, firstly, some source of wealth in the Persian Gulf for the control of which a large investment had to be made. This investment also had to be made in competition with merchants from Cambay, by now dominated by Muslim merchants. Bribes were offered to the local ruler, thus this 'stone' could have been a local mineral resource of great value. When the stone was brought back to Bhadreshvar, Jagaḍū was pleased at the investment and also at the fact of having outbid the Cambay merchant. The Cambay trade was the dominant one in the region and it was a matter of satisfaction to have had the better of a Cambay merchant, both in the possession of a valuable commodity and in terms of prestige and bidding power. This fortuitous investment, exploited with the help of Bhadra, thus made Jagaḍū even richer and thus more meritorious, as he could engage more freely in charitable activity. He was also blessed by the god of the ocean that fortune would be faithful to him and all his ships would come safely to port. The ethics of trade are not in question here: wealth gained by mysterious means is acceptable if it is used in the service of charity and pious acts.

Due to the influence of his guru, Paramadeva of the Pūrṇimā *gaccha*, Jagaḍū then led a pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya and Girnar with the Jaina community of the town: 'the fourfold Samgha which included many monks of the Purnima Gachchha, came forth from Bhadresvarapura, 'just as the pure doctrine issues from the mouth of a lord of sages'.' On his return, Jagaḍū constructed and endowed several Jaina structures in and around the town, including temples, a well, a garden and a hospital. He also restored a Śaivite temple and built a mosque for the local Ismā'īlī community.

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[89] Cambay was routinely known as an Arab port due to the numbers of foreign merchants settled there. See Chapter 2. Turuṣka was a common appellation for Muslims, it did not necessarily denote ethnic Turks. See Chattopadhyaya, *Representing*, p.40.

[90] The tale indicates that Jagadu received some assistance from local Śaivite yogis in exploiting the resource that the stone contained, possibly a valuable mineral or a marine commodity such as ambergris, often found in the Persian Gulf.

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The image of Jainas in the history of Gujarat has been that of austere, vegetarian merchants, well-known for their ethics in business. The story of Jagaḍū demonstrates chinks in this image. Jainas (even in the eyes of their laudatory chroniclers) were often less than austere and dabbled in business for which they were censured within their community. If they followed up their errors with sufficient penance and philanthropy, however, they could be rehabilitated and lauded in posterity. Moreover, Jagadu's career spanning business in pastoral livestock, precious goods and horses demonstrates the various worlds a Jaina merchant could travel through on the way to becoming a magnate backed by the respectability of Jaina *muni*s and ready access to royal courts. Indeed, the story makes a moral point of his rise from the simple world of shepherds and she-goats to one of glamour and service to royalty through the horse trade. On the way, he is helped by a pastoralist goatherd, a sea-faring associate and a Saiva yogi, none of whom form the dominant image of Jainism today. In the fourteenth century, the Srimali Jainas were claiming kinship with the Paramaras and more importantly, were part of a larger world of trade that depended on goatherds, Saiva yogis, sea-captains and horse traders, all participants in an increasingly complex political economy.[91]

Islam

There is some evidence that Muslim individuals and communities reached the coast of Gujarat as early as the late seventh century, in fact, very soon after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. While it is difficult to ascertain exactly when settlements of Muslims began, it is likely that pre-Islamic Arabs traded with and settled along the western coast of India. By the ninth century, there were large settlements of Muslims in the ports of Gujarat. References to Muslims settled in western India crop up regularly in epigraphic evidence of the subsequent period. There is an inscription that records that a Muslim feudatory of the Rashtrakutas in the Sanjan region of south Gujarat endowed a rest-house for pilgrims and travellers.[92] The twelfth-century inscriptions from Bhadreshvar have clear indications that a community of Muslims lived there, probably Ismāʿīlīs with links to the outpost of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Yemen.[93]

Evidence of Muslims settling in the hinterland appears from the thirteenth century in inscriptions from Junagadh and Anhilvada.[94] By this time, the Delhi sultanate was well established and it is likely that Muslim merchants and missionaries had travelled into the interiors of Gujarat well before this time. Inscriptions from Nagaur, now in Rajasthan but intermittently a

[91] Campbell and Kirparam, eds., *Hindus*, vol.II, pp. 469-502, 496.
[92] Sircar, *Select Inscriptions I*, p.55.
[93] Shokoohy, Bayani-Wolpert, and Shokoohy, *Bhadresvar*, p.54-55.
[94] Desai, "13th century," p.355.

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part of the Gujarat kingdom, show that there was a substantial community of Ismā'īlīs here too in the twelfth century. Meanwhile, Muslims had long been settled in Sind and it is likely that there were settlements in the contiguous region of Kacch. The Bhadreshvar settlement dates from the mid-twelfth century, but Muslims had ruled parts of southern Sind from the eighth century.

An early Muslim proselytiser was in hinterland Gujarat in the early thirteenth century, as is shown by the grave of Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh Arjun in Petlad dated 1236.[95] Traditional accounts hold that Māngrolī Shāh (Sayyid Maḥmūd b. Ḥasan b. 'Alī) came to Saurashtra in the early eleventh century and carried out many conversions of local people in Mangrol.[96] Preachers continued to come to Gujarat in subsequent years. From the fourteenth century, there was an influx of north Indian Muslims into Gujarat. Again, after the invasion of Timur, elites fled the disintegrating Delhi sultanate and many came to Gujarat. An important ṣūfī order, that of the Rifā'īs, was established when Sayyid Aḥmad Kabīr arrived in Ahmadabad the fourteenth century.[97] The Uraizis were found in Gujarat from the early fifteenth century when Sayyid Budha Ya'qūb, the descendant of a cavalry commander who planted the banner of Islam on the hill citadel of Ajmer (AD 1165), arrived there.[98] The ṣūfī family that became closest to the sultans was that of the Bukhārīs, established by Sayyid Burḥān al-Dīn Quṭb-i-'Ālam, who came and settled in Patan with his mother at the age of 10 in AD 1397. He moved to Ahmedabad when the city was founded.[99]

It is increasingly clear that Ismā'īlī preachers were influential in many parts of north and north-west India from a very early period. There were Ismā'īlī converts in Sind by the late ninth century, followed by political power in the form of an outpost of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Multan.[100] The Fāṭimid principality lasted less than fifty years and was destroyed by the strongly Sunni Ghaznavid Maḥmūd in 1005, but small Ismā'īlī populations continued to live in the Sind-Multan region. After this, the *da'wa* (mission) in Multan remained in existence and Ismā'īlī revolts against the Ghaznavid governor occurred in 1041 and then against the Ghurids in 1175. Although there is no certainty about what groups were the first to be converted, it is likely that these included pastoralist and peasant groups from the countryside in Upper Sind, perhaps

[95] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.1865.
[96] Syed Imamuddin Dargahwala, *Gujarat-na Auliya (Saints of Gujarat)*, vol. I (Navsari: Author, 1973), pp.9-11.
[97] James McNabb Campbell, ed., *Gujarat Population: Musalmans and Parsis*, Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IX, Part II (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1899; reprint, as *Muslim and Parsi Castes and Tribes of Gujarat*, Vintage Books, 1990.), p.6 fn.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] MacLean, *Arab Sind*, pp. 134-135.

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including branches of the Jāts and Sūmrās.[101] However, this phase of pre-Nizārī Ismā'īlī influence in Sind does not seem to be explicitly associated with or recalled in the *ginān*s.

The next Ismā'īlī mission was established in Gujarat by *dā'ī*s from Ṣulayḥid Yemen in the reign of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir (d. 1094). According to a version from the Musta'lī tradition, a *dā'ī* Abd Allah arrived in Gujarat and made his way to the capital, eventually winning over the ruler as a convert. After the Nizārī-Musta'lī schism of 1094, the Nizārī variant of Ismā'īlism was introduced into Sind and became the dominant form, with its main centre at Ucch, south of Multan. This time, proselytisation was aimed at the trading communities and sections of the Lohāṇā community were converted.

Missionaries now began to travel to other parts of north India and the next major sites of Ismā'īlī settlement and activity were Gujarat, Kacch and Rajasthan. The Druze sect also became active in Sind.[102] Small colonies of Ismā'īlī merchants appear to have settled in the trading ports along the coast. The earliest Islamic buildings in India, at Bhadreshvar in Kacch, were constructed by Ismā'īlī merchants with links to Fāṭimid Yemen in the late twelfth century.[103] Although there is no evidence that this colony had spread further inland or had links with other Ismā'īlī groups in the subcontinent, missionary influence in the hinterland can be inferred from a twelfth-century Ismā'īlī gravestone of the son of a *dā'ī* at Nagaur in Rajasthan.[104] From about this time, various *da'ī*s are believed to have been working in north India, beginning with Satgur Nūr. Pīr Shams was active in Sind and Punjab and is also believed to have carried the message to Kashmir and Bengal.[105] We thus have a picture of Ismā'īlī missionaries fanning out into northern and western India from the late ninth century. By AD 1500, pockets of Ismā'īlī influence were to be found all over North India, particularly in Sind, southern Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

In the early period, it appears that the Ismā'īlīs in western India consisted of ethnic Arab or Persian merchant settlers as well as local converts from pastoralist, cultivating or merchant groups. These included militarised peasants and pastoralists from north-west India, some of

[101] Ibid., p. 132, fn. 19, pp.141-2, 150.
[102] Farhad Daftary, *The Isma`ilis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 410, Tazim R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismaili Muslim Saint, Pir Shams*, McGill Studies in the History of Religions (SUNY Press, 1995), p.56.
[103] Z.A. Desai, "Kufi epitaphs from Bhadreswar in Gujarat," *Epigraphia Indica: Arabic and Persian Supplement* (1965): p.5, Shokoohy, Bayani-Wolpert, and Shokoohy, *Bhadresvar*, p.3-4.
[104] Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Rajasthan I*, vol. Part IV Iranian inscriptions down to the early Safavid period Vol. XLIX *India: State of Rajasthan*, Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum (London: Lund Humphries, 1986), pp. 76-77.
[105] The dates of this semi-legendary figure are discussed in Kassam, *Songs*, pp. 93-94. According to Daftary, he must have lived in the fourteenth century. Daftary, *Ismailis*, p. 478.

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whom went on to become part of its Rajput status hierarchy.[106] The early stories also include miracle stories against adversaries such as *jogī*s and ṣufī *pīr*s who were worsted in the contest and were banished or forced to accept the Ismā'īlī faith. After the fall of Alamut to the Mongols in 1256, more Nizārī missionaries came to Sind and Gujarat, Ucch in particular becoming an important centre of the faith. While the Nizārī missionaries worked among the peasant and pastoralist groups, the Musta'lī influence seems to have been restricted to merchant groups who came to be called Bohras or Vohras. Although it appears that Musta'lī missionaries did not have had a wider influence, this has not yet been systematically researched.

This crucial phase of Nizārī activities, from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, has hardly been chronicled in non-Ismā'īlī historical records, the traditions in the *ginān*s being almost the sole source of information about them. There are scattered mentions of 'heretical' and 'semi-Islamized' groups in the accounts of the Delhi Sultans, some of whom were Ismā'īlīs.[107] Kacch, with its proximity to Sūmrā-dominated lower Sind and its history of Ismā'īlī settlements from the twelfth century was a natural home for Ismā'īlī groups. Maḥmūd Begaḍā, the sultan of Gujarat, campaigned against the chieftains of the region in 1471 and compelled the Sūmrās and Soḍhās to submit. His injunctions to them included giving up matrimonial and other relations with Hindus and being instructed in (Sunni) Islam.[108] By the end of the fifteenth century, the influence of Ismā'īlīs in Gujarat was in decline.

Although the *ginān*s are virtually the only source of information about the activities of the mission in this period, it is clear that it was a time when considerable success was achieved. This is buttressed by the recent recording of new information about the *da'wa* and its converts from the compositions and traditions of pastoralist and occupational groups such as the Biśnoīs, Meghvāls and Āhīrs. Many of these corroborate and reflect the themes in the *ginān*s and show that Ismā'īlī influence encompassed much wider circles than previously suspected. These indicate that that the sects of Rāmdev, Jambha, Āī Mātā and other such figures that appear to be manifestations of saint- and hero-worship within popular Hinduism were formerly part of the larger Nizārī *da'wa* in the subcontinent (sometimes called the Satpanth) and are still linked through the commonality of their compositions, rituals and networks of pilgrimage.[109] Some of these sects thought fit to jettison or hide their Ismā'īlī affiliations later, but they were known in

[106] On this phenomenon, see Kolff, *Naukar*.
[107] On the rebellion of Nur Turk in the reign of Raziyya see Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 646-647. Firuz Shah claimed to have suppressed rebel sects including the Shī'ī Rāfiẓīs and other 'heretics'. "Futuhat-i Firoz Shahi," in *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, ed. H.M. Elliot and John Dowson (1867), p. 377-378.
[108] Misra and Rahman, eds., *MS*, p. 127.
[109] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, passim.

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some cases to the Nizārī *da'wa* and later were revealed to ethnographers. As these shrines and compositions cannot be reliably dated, it is only through careful comparative study that they reveal patterns and trends. However, questions still remain. To what extent were Ismā'īlī groups in the pre-fifteenth century period linked to each other? Did individual preachers branch out into their own sects or did they maintain contacts with a central authority in Multan, Ucch or Persia? While the 'official' branches of the Nizārī *da'wa* were clearly closely linked, what was the nature of contact of the central *da'wa* with the hero- and saint-cults and their lay adherents?

Such sects, particularly those that demonstrate signs of 'syncretism', have often been dismissed as marginal to the history of religious identity in South Asia. They are seen as part of secret, low-status, cultic beliefs without much consequence for the history of either Hinduism or Islam.[110] However, it is now becoming clear that such sects were much more significant than formerly believed and also commanded a widespread lay allegiance, whether covert or not. Further, medieval sectarian religiosity is closely bound up with the processes of caste- and state-formation in Western India. Several indications and illustrations of these processes may be discerned in the *ginān*s and Satpanthī compositions.

While attempts have been made to place the history of the Ismā'īlīs in the context of other Muslim groups functioning in South Asia, e.g., the ṣūfīs who are believed to have been responsible for much of the conversion to Islam in the early period, little effort has been made to place the Ismā'īlīs in the religious context of their potential converts. The Ismā'īlīs were in fact among a number of groups competing for followers, patrons and resources. Thus, to understand the spread of the Ismā'īlīs, it might be as useful to study the rise of Vaiṣṇavism as to study the ṣūfīs. This would also go some way towards explaining the links between medieval Indian sectarian literature and Satpanthī compositions. Our understanding of Ismā'īlī history tends to be coloured by the experience of the Khojā community and its process of self-definition from the nineteenth century. However, Ismā'īlī history in South Asia extends over a much wider field. Although it was never a 'state' religion in India (apart from the short-lived Fāṭimid outpost in Multan), the history of the Ismā'īlīs is inextricably bound up with politics and we may find that it revises our understanding of the process of medieval state formation, the rise of the Rajputs, the rise of sectarian traditions and the widespread 'syncretic' traditions of the region.

It is often not recognised that the penetration of brahmanical civilisation into Gujarat from the eighth century was virtually coterminous with the settlement of Muslim merchants along

[110] Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Subcontinent* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 140.

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its coast. Islam in the region is thus virtually as old as the religious cults then being unified under the Purāṇic body of literature. Further, the introduction of Islam in India was neither by conquest nor by the militant ṣūfī as in north India and Bengal. The earliest layer of Islamic conversion, largely by Ismāʿīlī missionaries, was accomplished through persuasion and covert means which did not insist on the relinquishing of established life-cycle customs. In this, Islam was presented as one of a variety of competing belief-systems that often used similar methods.

This long history of engagement with indigenous groups in north India is closely bound up with the transformation and evolution of local polities and societies. As Ismāʿīlī preachers established footholds all over the region between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries, the political landscape was transforming itself. Pastoralist chieftaincies were replaced by the Delhi sultanate whose armies were sent out over large parts of the subcontinent. Many local rulers were defeated and supplanted by governors from Delhi – as in Gujarat – while other chieftains continued in their holdings on payment of tribute. Pastoralist clans migrated into Gujarat, Sind and Rajasthan, settling and clearing new territories and establishing new principalities. Over time, many of these were incorporated into a widening network of clans who intermarried and established a hierarchy of status amongst themselves – later collectively called Rajputs. Other clans, some of which were militarily less successful, or were incorporated by conquest into the Rajput hierarchy, achieved lower-status positions.

Ismāʿīlism in western India has many of the characteristics of medieval belief-systems which arose outside the purview of state patronage. Aspects of Ismāʿīlī practice overlap with several of the categories of medieval religion listed above. This may have something to do with the fact that Ismāʿīlī beliefs were disseminated among merchants, pastoralists, peasants and lower-status occupational castes over a wide geographical area. Conversion to Ismāʿīlism was not a unitary phenomenon. There were several strands of it and the literature reveals some of these tensions. The Ismāʿīlīs had to compete for resources with other proselytising groups active in this period and possibly also with each other. When Imām Shāh arrived in Gujarat in the mid-fifteenth century, it is likely that a number of Ismāʿīlī traditions were already coexisting in Gujarat. While there might have been a millenarian dream that all converted groups would one day rise up in unison, in practice all these groups continued to evolve within their own social circumstances. At times there was some political organisation and accordingly some of the literature represents political aims; at other times, it has a more didactic or devotional aspect.

Like other religious groups, the Ismāʿīlīs had political objectives. In some cases, this took the form of actual political mobilisation, e.g., the groups who marched on Delhi during the reign

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of Raẓiyya. It is evident that the *dā'īs* were aware of the hierarchies within the local society they encountered – they approached powerful pastoralist groups in the countryside, some of which took on a militant character and posed a military threat to the towns and centres of power. In other cases, political intervention was through access to rulers. In common with other sects who made attempts to influence rulers and those around them, the Satpanthī tradition has several examples of attempts to link up with rulers, their wives and subordinates.[111]

Elsewhere, well-known figures are invoked to lend legitimacy to the tale. For example, Siddharāja, the archetypal and long-lived Caulukya ruler (r. 1094-1143), is alleged to have been converted to a variety of traditions, including Nizārī and Musta'lī Ismā'īlism, Sunni Islam and Jainism.[112] The Nizārī tradition of the conversion of Siddharaja is a classic example of a conversion narrative. Here, Satgur Nūr first caused the icon in the royal temple to dance at his bidding which caused the priest to surrender to the *pīr*. He then had a confrontation with and routed the king's magician preceptor, a *jogī* or Śaivite ascetic. After witnessing several miracles, the king and queen accepted the new faith.[113] Here the narrative indicates familiarity with the structure of Caulukya authority, recognising the priest as the custodian of the idol-temple and the *jogī* as the ruler's counsellor.

Some of the groups who accepted the Ismā'īlī message went on to undergo processes of Rajputisation – this includes Jats, Sūmrās, Bhaṭṭīs and perhaps the Sammas. Other groups were left out of this process of upward mobility, becoming part of the continuum of armed peasants and pastoralists all over North India. Groups that responded to the Ismā'īlī message later found that this affiliation was damaging to their chances of rising in status and jettisoned traces of it. Nevertheless, several of them retained traces of previous practices which included accommodation of or obeisance to Ismā'īlī beliefs.

The Ismā'īlī groups were part of a network of linked religious movements from medieval times and may have been a catalytic factor in the development of much of modern religious identity. They were part of a continuum of religious affiliation – internally contested and more often than not, opposed by state authority which made regular attempts to apply normative standards to it. Each of these traditions is a site of contestation: while they may represent spaces

[111] As witnessed in the stories of Surjādevī, Rāṇī Rūpānde and Kākā Akelā and his wife, the gardeners of the king's minister and several others. See Kassam, *Songs*, p. 102, Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p. 86-87. It is significant that many of these stories have the queen being converted secretly to the faith, eventually convincing her husband through her steadfastness. Similar tales testifying to the influence of the queen in insinuating religious change in royal households are seen in the adoption of *gurus* and mother-goddess cults. See Harlan, *Rajput Women*, Chapter 3, especially pp. 100-101.
[112] Misra, *Muslim Communities*, p. 12.
[113] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

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set aside from normative religious traditions, they also represent a history of intense and often violent struggle for power and resources. The millenarian aspects of some of the *ginān*s reflect these social and political contests. Others, in their stories of conversion and mystical awakening and the worsting of *jogī*s and rival *pīr*s, represent the aims to acquire followers, humiliate opponents and find patrons. A common vocabulary of messianic themes featuring an martial, mounted avenger cast in the local idiom was common all over India, especially among sedentarising pastoralist groups gradually being fitted into a caste order. These themes recur regularly from about 1300, including the colonial period.[114]

Pilgrimage

From the thirteenth century, while monumental temple building was on the decline, networks of pilgrimage were being consolidated. In the early period, the chief group for whom pilgrimage was important was the Jainas. As a netwok of sacred sites associated with *tīrthankara*s developed, groups of lay Jainas travelled to them, often making donations for their upkeep during their visits. Although there was no scriptural injunction on Jainas to conduct pilgrimages, they became a means of linking members of the community and combined recreational and religious benefits for those who undertook them. The Jaina interest in travel led to the composition of travel manuals such as the *Vividhatīrthakalpa* (Guidebook to Various Pilgrimage Places) which offered an account of the history and significance of the great Śvetāmbara holy places in Gujarat. Written in the early fourteenth century (after the Khaljī conquest of Gujarat) this volume contains information on over forty sites of pilgrimage.[115] For Jaina grandees and merchants, it was meritorious to provide facilities for pilgrims at major shrines. On Girnar, the Vāghelā minister Tejahpāla commissioned 'an excellent fort, monastery, drinking station, temple, and a beautiful garden, named Tejalapura after himself.'[116]

In addition, there was the pilgrimage circuit of Hindu sacral sites of Prabhas, centred on the temple of Somanatha, Dvaraka, Dakor and Shamlaji. The fifteenth century saw a rise in Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* that saw the Vaiṣṇavisation of a number of sacral sites by the sixteenth century. The *Ḍankapura Mahātmya*, a local *tīrthamahātmya*, states that the image of Raṇachoḍajī lived in

[114] See for example the messianic theme in Sumit Sarkar, "The Kalki-Avatar of Bikrampur: A Village Scandal in Early Twentieth Century Bengal," in *Subaltern Studies VI*, ed. Ranajit Guha (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989). Many of the so-called 'subaltern' protests of the colonial period featured a messianic theme, usually missed or glossed over by historians seeking only an anti-colonial or nationalist agenda.

[115] John Cort, "Twelve Chapters from The Guidebook to Various Pilgrimage Places (Vividha Tirtha Kalpa) of Jinaprabhasuri," in *The Clever Adulteress and the Faithful Wife, and Other Stories from the Jaina Tradition*, ed. Phyllis Granoff (Oakville, Ont: Mosaic Press, 1990), p.245.

[116] Ibid., p.257.

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the house of the devotee Boḍānā for four hundred years and was enshrined in the temple only in 1556 by Nanda, a devotee from Cambay.[117] The sixteenth also saw the rise of the Dvaraka region as a Vaiṣṇava pilgrimage site and the Narayana Sarovar temple was built in Kacch.[118] By the fifteenth century, a new circuit of 'popular' devotional pilgrimage was beginning to grow around such sites as the Bahucarājī temple. These sites, usually sites of mother goddess worship, were gaining prominence as sites for healing and fertility.

The Girnar mountain with its Jaina, Muslim, Nāthpanthī, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava shrines was a sacred site of great antiquity and was in the nineteenth century believed to be the resort of Aghorīs and cannibals.[119] The region around Mount Girnar possesses an important Vaiṣṇava shrine. 'In this Ksetra, the Svarnarekha river flows where Viṣṇu stands in the form of Damodara Hari.'[120] The Vaiṣṇava shrines here include the Dāmodara temple and the Revati tank from the thirteenth century, the latter possessing images of 24 forms of Viṣṇu. On Mount Girnar is a temple of Ambika and nearby are the images of Pradyumna and Sāmba, the sons of Kṛṣṇa. In addition, the Cakratīrtha on Mount Girnar was formerly a temple of Vāmana.

A number of shrines associated with Muslim pirs and frequented by pastoralists and occupational groups became popular from the fifteenth century. Some of these were associated with fairs and periodic markets, thus adherents performed pilgrimages to these sites while conducting business. A fair is held in Chaklasi in Kheda district of central Gujarat on the occasion of the death anniversary (*'urs*) of Amīr Sayyid Pīr who lived there in the reign of Maḥmūd Begaḍā. In a motif common to many 'syncretic' saint-figures, including Kabīr, a heap of flowers was found instead of his body after his death.[121] This motif prevented conflict by allowing followers to share the saint's remains and conduct the death rituals of their choice, whether burial or cremation. At Amod is the shrine, frequented by Hindus as well as Muslims, of Quṭb Shāh and four other soldiers of Maḥmūd Begaḍā who died in battle with local rulers and were buried in a common grave over which five tombs were erected.[122] This is an example of the vogue for the Panca Pīr, five saints, all over northern and western India. The significance of the number was related in terms of the Muslim and especially Shī'ī reverence for the family of the Prophet (comprising Muḥammad, 'Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥusain and Fāṭima) and the Hindu theme of the five Pāṇḍava heroes and the older quintet of heroes of the Yādavas.

[117] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.34.
[118] Ibid., p.29.
[119] J.W. Watson, *The Statistical Account of Junagadh; being the Junagadh contribution to the Kathiawar Portion of the Bombay Gazetteer* (Bombay: 1880), p.87.
[120] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, p.33.
[121] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p.70, Trivedi, *Fairs*, p.200.
[122] Trivedi, *Fairs*, p.162.The Yādava heroes were Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Satyaki, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

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There are several sites, especially in south and central Gujarat, dedicated to the commemoration of Bālamshā or Bālā Pīr, most of which claim to have originated during the sultanate period. In some cases, Bālamshā is associated with the famous Suhrawardī ṣūfī, Shaykh Abū Muḥammad (Bahā' al-Dīn) Zakariyyā of Multan.[123] Fairs associated with these shrines invariably draw both Muslim and Hindu devotees including Rajputs, Garāsiyās, Kolīs, Ṭhākarḍās, Naḍodās, Kumbhārs, Bharvāḍs and Harijans, a mix, in other words, of pastoralist and occupational castes with ambiguous religious affiliations.

The worship at the *dargāh* of Bābā Ghor, the patron saint of the carnelian mines near Ratanpur in south Gujarat, is mentioned even in the fourteenth century by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.[124] This Afghan adventurer-holy man is believed to have pioneered the agate mining industry of the region, which was already flourishing in the fourteenth century.[125] Subsequently, Bābā Ghor became the preceptor for the Sīdī community of Abyssinian origin and an annual fair dominated by the Sīdīs from all over Gujarat came to be held at the shrine.

Another shrine which became the focus of pilgrimage and an annual fair by the fifteenth century is that of Dāval Shāh Pīr, seen as a healer and a promoter of agriculture. The main shrine is at Amran in Saurashtra but smaller commemorative shrines can be found at several other places in Saurashtra and Kacch.[126] 'Dāval Shāh' was a courtier of Maḥmūd Begaḍā, a Qurayshi named 'Abd al-Laṭīf Malik Maḥmūd entitled Dāvar al-Mulk. He developed a reputation for justice towards the cultivators of his lands as a result of which people flocked to his territories: 'They say that he charged the cultivators of his estates only the small rates sanctioned by Muhammadan Law, and not an iota above.'[127] He did not permit his troops to plunder fields they passed through or even to graze their horses in them.

He was also a righteous and perhaps proselytising Muslim. He was appointed *thānedār* of the region of Amran in Saurashtra and 'used often to engage in warfare with the unbelievers', eventually securing the submission of the volatile pastoralist groups of the Kacch frontier.[128] He had a reputation as a healer during his own lifetime for curing a prince of the Deccan of leprosy.

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[123] Ibid., p.55.
[124] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.212.
[125] Helene Basu, "Muslim shrines as boundary markers of a cult region: the network of Sidi saints in Western India," in *Pilgrimage: Concepts, Themes, Issues and Methodology*, ed. Makhan Jha (New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1995), p.65, Peter Francis, Jr., "Baba Ghor and the Ratanpur Rakshisha," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 29, no. 2 (1986): p.200.
[126] Trivedi, *Fairs*, p.21.
[127] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.82.
[128] Ibid., p.83.

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After he was killed by a local pastoralist chieftain in 1509, his tomb became a major site of pilgrimage:

> From that day to this the fame of the Malik as a martyr attracts numbers of believers from far and near to his shrine, and his miracles, after martyrdom, have been numerous. The blind are given eye-sight, the lame return whole, the barren are gladdened by the birth of children and few return disappointed from his shrine. Others having some desires to be obtained, put fetters on their legs with locks of iron joining the fetters. It has often happened that, when one of these has gained his desire, the lock has opened of itself, and the fetters have dropped.[129]

Intriguingly, the properties of the shrine also extended to money matters and transactions could be facilitated: 'Some people wishing for gold are given it by the saint by being directed to apply to a particular person at a given address for a certain sum. The man referred to as the giver is also described in a dream to pay the sum on appearance to the person described.'[130] In the nineteenth century, the Pīr retained his powers to intervene in pastoralist disputes at the frontier. One story from north Gujarat relates that thieves were stopped by a row of horses miraculously materialised by the Pīr.[131] Here again, visitors at the fair and the shrine of the Pīr included a range of groups: Muslims, brahmanas, merchants, Pāṭīdārs, potters, and lower castes.

At Matar in Kheda district is a fair associated with the *dargāh* of a *fakīr* named Ātanshāh Pīr.[132] A local Rajput king named Bālangī had taken a vow to eat only after killing a Muslim daily. A passing *fakīr*, Ātanshāh, cursed Bālangī and in due course the latter was defeated by Maḥmūd Begaḍā and his palace destroyed. There is no other evidence about this fair or shrine but it is a stereotypical story that may be associated with Maḥmūd Begaḍā's pacification and clearance of central Gujarat in the second half of the fifteenth century.

The Ismā'īlī preacher Imām Shāh who established himself in a village near Ahmadabad, purportedly on a charter granted by Maḥmūd Begaḍā, was an important agent in the pacification of the 'turbulent' clans of central Gujarat in the mid-fifteenth century. He made converts from among the minor pastoralist groups and cultivators of the region as well among the Kolīs who had a reputation for thievery and plunder. One of these was Nāthākākā, a Kolī dacoit turned disciple of Imām Shāh whose grave is commemorated at a shrine and fair in Baroda district.[133]

Another *dargāh* that became the focus of pilgrimage was that of Hājī Pīr located at Banni on the edge of the Rann of Kacch. Hājī Pīr was reputed to have been a soldier named 'Alī Akbar

[129] Ibid., p.84.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Trivedi, *Fairs*, p.87.
[132] Ibid., p.112.
[133] Ibid., p.147.

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in the army of Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad of Ghor who invaded Gujarat in 1197. After giving up service he settled in the village Nara and served people, laying down his life trying to recover cows driven away by dacoits.[134] Hājī Pīr is an early example from Gujarat of the crusading warrior-saint who were more common in north India and Bengal. In Gujarat his legend is similar to other pastoralist heroes who died rescuing cattle or in skirmishes with neighbouring clans.

Another warrior hero is Rāval Pīr in Kacch, believed to have lived in the fourteenth century. When his mother Cāraṇ Deval prevented him from leading a celibate life, he became an ascetic. He was obliged to compete with the Muslim missionaries who were then active in Kacch and in one contest, caused several to drown in the sea. He attached himself to a chieftain of the Dhal clan, caring for his horses and then assisting him to victory against the Rāṭhoḍs with the help of his miraculous powers. Before his death, he built himself a grave and a stone horse near the place he used to graze horses and asked the chieftain to erect a tomb over it. This location became a popular annual fair, frequented by both Hindus and Muslims.[135]

The shrines of *ghāzī*s, holy warriors from invading Muslim armies who died in battle often became sites of healing and attracted a wide range of pilgrims of all denominations. One of these is the fair and shrine that commemorate Ja'far Muẓaffar, a general of Maḥmūd of Ghazna who died in battle at Somanath Patan in the eleventh century.[136] The shrine of Dāval Shāh described above also belongs to this category. Perhaps the most prominent of these is the shrine of Mīrā Dātār Pīr in Unava in south Gujarat. The tombsite of one of Muẓaffar Shāh's generals who died in the fifteenth century, this soon became a site for the healing of mental illness and infertility.[137]

By the end of the fifteenth century, a complex web of local and trans-regional tomb and saint shrines had developed all over Gujarat. As trade and settlement extended into new areas, some of these shrines began to attract pilgrims from distant places in the hope of cures or boons. Some of them became sites for large seasonal festivities, livestock fairs or periodic markets, often on dates associated with death anniversaries or other festivals. Others remained local institutions for the benefit of the local community. Many of these shrines became wealthy and influential on the proceeds of the pilgrim traffic.

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[134] Ibid., p.39.
[135] Khakhar, *Report on the Architectural and Archaeological Remains in the Provinces of Kachh.*, p.25.
[136] Trivedi, *Fairs*, p.35.
[137] Beatrix Pfleiderer, "Mira Datar Dargah: The Psychiatry of a Muslim Shrine," in *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India*, ed. Imtiaz Ahmad (New Delhi: Manohar, 1984), p.201.

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Other cults, healing and medicine

The most important feature of pastoralist religion was the worship of various forms of the mother goddess, usually as manifestations of Śakti. Many pastoralist clans owed allegiance to martial mother goddesses who were protectors in battle and guarantors of success in general. The Cauhāns and Jādejās for example, evoke Āśāpurā Mātā as their champion. Others venerated Khoḍiyār or Śikotar. An important translocal site was that of Bahucarā in north Gujarat, visited and venerated by a variety of groups, especially Rajputising pastoralists and bards, as part of an expanding pilgrimage network from the fifteenth century. Many of these goddesses required animal sacrifice. Āśāpurā Mātā required a buffalo sacrifice from the Jādejā rulers of Kacch.[138] From the thirteenth century, there are literary references to the *Devī mahātmya* in Sanskrit poems such as the *Sūraṭhotsava* by Someśvara, the author of the *Kīrtikaumudi*.[139] That Śāktism was connected with royal power is indicated by the fact that Somesvara was the royal poet of the Caulukyas. By the fifteenth century, the Caṇḍi episode of the *Devī mahātmya* was translated into Old Gujarati by Śrīdhara as the *Devīkavitta*.[140] He also wrote a ballad *Raṇamalla Chanda* describing the defence of Idar against Ẓafar Khān. The development of the *garbā* as both a poetic metre and folk-dance is related to Śakti worship.

The region between Multan in Punjab and Saurashtra is home to a number of temples of the sun cult from the Gupta period to about 1400 C.E. In fact, this belt, comprising southern Punjab, Sind, Rajasthan and Gujarat, was the main location for the practice of sun worship in India – the other being Orissa. The prevalence of the sun cult in Gujarat is indicated by the sun temples at Modhera in north Gujarat as well as in Somanath, Than, Dhamlej and Chorvad in Saurashtra. Several instances of composite images dating from the fourteenth century have been found in Gujarat. These include images which combine Sūrya and Nārāyaṇa and in one case, the images of Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Sūrya.[141]

The sun cult is believed to have entered Gujarat from the west. There are several instances of solar worship in western Asia and it is assumed that some of its practitioners entered India in the post-Gupta period. Solar cults also have a connection with variants of Islam. An Ismā'īlī missionary of Sind was accused of heresy for permitting his converts, former sun-worshippers, to follow their former dietary and matrimonial practices.[142] The sun-cult of Multan

[138] Khakhar, *Report on the Architectural and Archaeological Remains in the Provinces of Kachh.*, p.13.
[139] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.223.
[140] Ibid., p.224.
[141] Rangarajan, *Vaishnavism*, pp.36-55.
[142] MacLean, *Arab Sind*, p. 132.

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was an old one and its temple was invariably noticed by Arab travellers. It was destroyed by the early eleventh century, possibly by the Ismā'īlī governors of Multan, or more likely, in the wake of the Ghaznavid conquest of Multan in 1026. Other sects related to the Ismā'īlīs are also known to have had connections with the sun cult – the 'Alī Ilāhīs have solar legends and one branches of the Nuṣayriyya in Syria is called Shamsī because they believe that 'Alī resides in the sun.[143]

One tradition of the origin of the Somanāth temple associates it with the cure of leprosy, a disease often associated with sexual practices. Soma, the Moon, was married to twenty-five sisters but favoured only one of them. Their father, Prajāpati rebuked him but was ignored. He then made the Moon's face leprous. The Moon repented but the curse could not be revoked. The only way to wipe out the sin would be to worship Śiva. Accordingly, the Moon built the temple of Somānath, 'The Lord of the Moon'.[144]

Near the bottom of Girnar hill was a Muslim shrine which was reputed to have a beneficient effect on lepers.[145] The cure of leprosy and white leprosy is attributed in the *Sāmba Purāṇa* to the worship of the sun. Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa, was afflicted by leprosy and was eventually cured by obeisance to the sun.[146] The shrine of Dvaraka was also associated with the cure of leprosy.[147] It is interesting in this context to find a legend that Rā Māṇḍalik, the Cuḍāsamā ruler of Junagadh was endowed with the power to cure leprosy. His friend, the Vājā ruler of Somanath Patan (it is significant that the Śaiva temple of Somanath is not associated here with the cure of leprosy) was afflicted by leprosy and was advised by his priests to bathe in the Dāmodar *kuṇḍa* (tank) at Girnar. He bathed there in secret, but when Māṇḍalik heard of it, he went to meet his friend, after hastily pouring Ganges water over himself. When he embraced the Vājā, his leprosy was cured.[148]

Leprosy was a common feature of pre-modern life and was often more prevalent on islands and coastal areas.[149] Its symptoms were frequently confused with other skin diseases or with venereal diseases and the terms used to describe them were often the same. Seeming cures for leprosy may partly have been due to the ability, found prescriptively in Arabic medical

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[143] Ivanow, "Satpanth," p. 13.
[144] Wilberforce-Bell, *Kathiawad*, p.60.
[145] *Kathiawar*, pp. 408-409.
[146] R.C. Arora, "The Magas, Sun-Worship and the Bhavisya Purana," *Purana* III, no. 1: p. 47-76, Hazra, *Upapuranas*, p.76.
[147] A. Rigopoulos, *Dattatreya: the immortal guru, yogin, and avatara: a study of the transformative and inclusive character of a multi-faceted Hindu deity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), p.39.
[148] Desai, *Saurashtra-no Itihas (History of Saurashtra)*, p.113.
[149] Kenneth F. Kiple, ed., *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.410.

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literature from the tenth century, to distinguish true leprosy from minor skin ailments. In Europe and the Islamic world, the treatment for leprosy and subsequently for syphilis was the oral ingestion of mercury.[150] In medieval India, mercury was a prime ingredient in the alchemical experiments of the Nāthpanthīs and Tāntriks. It is likely that the Nāths, Tāntriks and other related groups at Girnar and elsewhere had the reputation of being able to cure skin conditions.

The cult of Dattātreya in the medieval period was largely spread by the Mahānubhāva sect which began in Gujarat in the late thirteenth century, but had its major impact in Maharashtra.[151] During this period, the deity came to have links with a number of other sects, notably the *śakti-pīṭhas*, the Dasanāmī order of *sādhus*, the Aghora *sampradāya*, the Nāth Panth and Jainism.[152] In the Jaina tradition, Dattātreya is worshipped as Neminātha, a tradition borne out in the Nātha literature in which Neminātha and Pārasnātha are regarded as sons of Matsyendranāth. Further, in the Jaina *mahāpurāṇas*, Datta figures as seventh in the list of nine Vāsudevas.[153] After Neminātha's austerities on Girnar, his first convert was a king Dattātri.[154] The *Śatrunjaya-mahātmya*, written after the twelfth century, foretells the advent of Kalkin, the tenth incarnation of Viṣṇu who would be born to a *mleccha* and would cause much destruction and persecution of the Jainas. His son and successor would be Datta who would be instructed in the Jaina doctrine and would spread it far and wide.[155]

Dattātreya was often manifested to devotees in disgusting or shocking form, in order to test their true devotion. His guises included those of a low-caste hunter carrying meat, a drunk or sexually promiscuous ascetic, a Muslim soldier or a *fakīr*. To the poet Eknāth whose guru Janardāna belonged to the Dattātreya *sampradāya*, the initial manifestation of the deity was in the form of a *fakīr*. However Janardana probably had a dual identity as an Ismā'īlī preacher.[156] A similar form of Dattātreya is seen on the Kalo Dungar of Kacch where there is a shrine to Dattātreya who manifests in the form of a *fakīr* with a dog.[157] The cult of Dattātreya thus would seem to bring together disparate cultic beliefs which, coincidentally, all have shrines in the Girnar

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[150] Roy Porter and W.F. Bynum, eds., *The Companion Encyclopedia to the History of Medicine* (Routledge, 1993), p. 562.
[151] Yashavant A. Raikar, "Sri Chakradhara: A Medieval Saint from Gujarat," *Journal of the Oriental Institute* 12 (1962).
[152] Rigopoulos, *Dattatreya*, p.89-109.
[153] Ibid., p. 98 and p.106, note 40.
[154] Amarji, *Tarikh-i-Sorath*, p. 47-48, Note.
[155] Lassen, "Papers on Satrunjaya and the Jains III," *Indian Antiquary* II (1873): p. 195-196.
[156] H. van Skyhawk, "Sufi influence in the *Ekanathi-bhagavat*," in *Devotional Literature in South Asia, Current Research, 1985-1988*, ed. R.S. McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), fn. 23, p. 77-78.
[157] James Burgess, "Revised list of the antiquarian remains in Cutch," *Indian Antiquary* VII (1878): p. 35. The *fakīr* identified with Dattātreya is named Pachamai Pir, 'the saint from the west'. Trivedi, *Fairs*, p.54.

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hills. The blessing of Dattātreya of Girnar thus conferred the approval of all the cults that he represented, particularly in his most common manifestation, a Muslim holy man. Girnar thus was a multifaceted and complex pilgrimage centre, inhabited by a number of competing cults. The nearby Dātār hill had a small shrine of Jamial Shāh near the summit, which was venerated by Muslims, Rajputs and 'lower class Hindus'. Jamial Shāh was said to have come from Thatta in Sind, sent by his preceptor Pīr Paṭṭā in the reign of Māṇḍalik, i.e., in the fifteenth century.[158]

Girnar was also associated with gold and it was believed that the river, Suvarṇarekhā, had alchemical powers.[159] This property also attracted religious figures of all denominations, including Tāntrics and others who dabbled in medicine and alchemy. The *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī* relates the story of a dervish who had filled his gourd with water from a spring on the Girnar mountain.

> The Darvish descended and went to the town, and unwillingly stopped at the shop of one Raeka, a grocer, to whom he entrusted his gourd and went out to answer a call of nature. And it so happened that a drop of water from the hanging gourd oozed out, transmuting into gold the grocer's iron weight which was lying under it. The wondering Raeka understood the process, and quickly taking the golden weight and the gourd placed them in a safe corner, and then set fire to his shop. Soon the Darvish returned and asked for his gourd. The wily grocer, who was lamenting and crying out for help, exclaimed "Cursed be thy gourd which brought this ruin on my shop. See how the flames are consuming everything. Woe is me; I am undone."
>
> The Darvish, who was unaware of the mystic action of the water, went back to the mountain, hoping again to fetch water from the fountain; but to his surprise he saw no trace of it. Like the fountain of life it was hidden from his sight! It is said that Raeka built from that wealth the famous temple of the Shravaks. He left descendants, who are still found in this land, living as common men.[160]

Hero-gods and local deities, some of which have a dual identity as Hindu gurus and Muslim *pīr*s, *avatāra*s and non-Sanskritic legends abound in the bardic chronicles. Apart from the surviving cults and sects there are also forgotten ones. The worship of Rāmdev Pīr is still an important feature of `popular religion' in Gujarat. Some cults, such as that of Rāmdev, were despised by Rajputs aspiring to brahmanical legitimisation, connected as they were with the lower

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[158] *Kathiawar*, pp. 408-409. Pīr Paṭṭa or Paṭho is identified in Sind with the Nāth tradition and is also called Gopīcand. He is also claimed by the Suhrawardi tradition. Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, pp.52-53. According to another tradition, he is said to have come to Kacch from Sindh. His grave in Shikarpur is on the place where he used to tend his cattle, where he miraculously brought fresh water out of the ground. Khakhar, *Report on the Architectural and Archaeological Remains in the Provinces of Kachh.*, p.34.

[159] Khan, *MA Supplement, trans.*, p.213.

[160] Ibid., pp.213-4. This account is significant also because it bears out the historical relationship between the pastoralist Raikas (also known as Rabaris) and the Śrāvaks or Jainas. An ethnographic account of this relationship is found in Srivastava, *Religious Renunciation of a Pastoral People*. In the Baroda State, the Rabārīs were reported as belonging to the Ramānandī, Bījmārgī and Ismā'īlī Satpanthi sects. G.H. Desai, *Glossary of Castes, Tribes and Races in the Baroda State* (Baroda: Census Office, 1912), p.83.

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castes and reputedly *vāma-mārgī* (left-handed) Tāntric practices.[161] It is important that several chieftaincies in Gujarat, especially in Kathiavad, did not rely solely on Brahmans for legitimation. Several clans such as the Cuḍāsamās had originated outside the pale of Brahmanical influence and owed allegiance to cults such as the above. Also, several clans were low status pastoralists who adopted cults such as these because they were in a local idiom. In Rajasthan, untouchables, Mers, Bhīls and even Jainas became followers of Rāmdev Pīr.

The raja of Bikaner and the governor of Nagaur, Muḥammad Khān (an appointee and kinsman of the Gujarat sultan) both became disciples of Jambha, a saint of the Biśnoīs, and had a dispute whether he was Hindu or Muslim, at which he asserted that he was above all distinctions of sect and caste.[162] Some Biśnoīs are of the Cāraṇ caste.[163] Another figure was Āī Mātā, said to be a follower of Shams Pīr, who was active in Gujarat in the fifteenth century. Āī, the equivalent of mother or grandmother[164] referred in Gujarat to the powerful goddess of the Cāraṇs.[165] The Cāraṇi Āī/Āvaḍ was born to Mammad/Mamoud Gaḍhavī. The ruler of Sind, Umar or Hamīr Sūmrā, a Rajput convert to Islam, wanted to marry her. On being rebuffed, he threatened violence, but the goddess spoke through Avad that the fall of the Sūmrās at the hands of the Sammās was already destined. Avad then led the Cāraṇs from Sind to Gujarat. A similar story of migration is also related by the Rabārīs.[166] The relationship with the Cāraṇs points to another feature of the Ismā'īlī influenced cults – their role not just as religious movements, but as conduits of information. These cults could have functioned at times in consonance with that other institution of privileged and coded information, the bardic communities of Bhāṭs and Cāraṇs, guarantors and genealogists to the Rajput clans. It is also significant in the light of the influence the Cāraṇ bardic caste had in the politics of fourteenth and fifteenth century Gujarat.

It is quite clear, as shown in the example of the Cūḍāsamās, that similar cults were active in Gujarat in the same period and additionally had a political significance there. While the pastoralist clans and immigrant adventurers were still mobile, as were the Ismā'īlī missionaries and *pīrs*, the Nāth yogis, the Bhāṭs and Cāraṇs, religious affiliation was less codified and its expression more flexible and accomodative. The 'power' of the *pīr*, *sant* or *devī* related largely to resource management – as miraculous granters of fertility, water diviners, defenders of cattle. This power may have been acknowledged without yet tying it down to a high-Brahmanical or

[161] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p. 79.
[162] Ibid., p. 189.
[163] Ibid., p. 203.
[164] Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p. 180.
[165] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p. 186, fn. 1.
[166] Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p. 181-185.

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high-Sunni identity. With the sedentarisation of many of the pastoralist clans by the end of the fifteenth century, the grant of tenures to many of them by the Gujarat sultans, especially under Maḥmūd Begaḍā and his son Muẓaffar II and the establishment of a descent-based hierarchy increasingly based on genealogical legitimation, the liminal character of these cults begins to decline. Some were absorbed over time into more defined traditions, such as those of the ṣūfīs, Vaiṣnavas, or orthodox Sunnis, a further tactic for survival.

Conversion

The religious marketplace of the period offered individuals and groups a range of religious choices. What evidence do we have for religious conversion in this period? Who were the instigators of such religious change? What were the groups or individuals being addressed? And finally, how were these changes recorded?

Episodes of religious conversion, whether actual or claimed, may be divided roughly into three categories. The most important of these was the conversion of a king or chieftain, the ultimate prize for the missionary and an event of significance in political terms. Proselytising traditions often claimed, as a marker of legitimacy, to have won over the ruler of the territory in which they operated. The king was approached through his converted subordinates or wife and, after witnessing a miracle, was persuaded to enter the fold. Reasons of state meant that the ruler was sometimes obliged to be discreet about his new allegiance, an explanation offered by the tradition as to why official chronicles failed to mention the conversion. Thus, a Bohrā tradition claims that Siddharāja Jayasiṃha was persuaded to embrace Islam, but kept this a secret.[167] Some of the Jaina chroniclers of the Caulukyas claim, for example, that most of the rulers, not merely Kumārapāla, were converted to Jainism.[168] Siddharāja Jayasiṃha is claimed to have been converted by the Musta'lī and Nizārī Ismā'īlīs as well as by a Sunni *pīr*.[169] Hero-saints such as Rāmdev Pīr are also believed to have converted chieftains by this method. One tradition claims that Mokal Siṃha (r.1420-33), the ruler of Mevad, supplicated before Rāmdev and granted him five *bighā*s of land after witnessing the miraculous birth of his heir from an earthen pot.[170] In such traditions, either the king is converted outright or, failing that, he is impressed and offers rewards and grants. In many cases, the king is approached through the medium of his wife who has been convinced first, an indicator of the importance of the queen and her natal family in alliance-dominated early Rajput politics. In some cases, the tradition does not go so far as claiming that

[167] Misra, *Muslim Communities*, p.10.
[168] Dundas, *The Jains*.
[169] Misra, *Muslim Communities*, p.9.
[170] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p.81.

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the ruler was actually converted, confining themselves to gaining legitimacy by the use of his name. An example of this is the Satpanthī tradition about a marriage alliance between the family of Imām Shāh and Maḥmūd Begaḍā. The tradition also claims that Imām Shāh performed a miracle before Maḥmūd, who offered him gifts including a bullock cart.[171]

For a missionary, ultimate success and legitimacy derived from having converted the king. Most stories of conversion from this period claim to have converted or at least secured the patronage of a 'king', whether a paramount sovereign, a minor chieftain or even a householder. It is usually representative kings associated with long periods of prosperity who became associated with conversion stories. At least four traditions claimed to have converted Siddharāja Jayasiṃha in the eleventh century: the Jainas and three Muslim traditions. Siddharāja was replaced only by Maḥmūd Begaḍā in the fifteenth century as the ultimate granter of legitimacy. This is also a gauge of the cultural influence of the ruler that he passes into folklore or religious tradition as the ultimate guarantor of the faith being peddled even though there is no other evidence of his interest in it.

The Caulukyas in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries held to Śaiva religious observance manifested by patronage of Śaiva monastic institutions, land grants to monasteries and Śaiva temples, prominent Śaiva ascetics at court and sacrifice as a ritual of kingship. They also extended patronage to Vaiṣṇava, mother goddess and Jaina temples and institutions at times, although this was usually as a manifestation of royal patronage than an indication of a change in primary allegiance. Only in the case of Kumārapāla can we be fairly sure that the primary allegiance of the Caulukya ruler did change from Śaivism to Jainism. This was accompanied by greater patronage to Jaina institutions and a disavowal of sacrifice. However this change in patronage did not last long and did not transform the basic nature of Caulukya religiosity. Kumārapāla's successor, Ajayapāla seems to have reverted to traditional Śaiva practice and all his successors followed suit.[172]

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[171] Misra, *Muslim Communities*, pp.59-60.

[172] An intriguing and uncorroborated tradition relates that more than one Caulukya rulers converted to Islam. In this account, the most enthusiastic Muslim was Ajayapāla (1174-77), the anti-Jaina successor of Kumarapāla, who apparently left only one temple standing in his dominions. Campbell, ed., *Gaz. Muslims*, p.5, fn.1, James Tod, *Travels in Western India: embracing a visit to the sacred mounts of the Jains, and the most celebrated shrines of Hindu faith between Rajputana and the Indus, with an acount of the ancient city of Nehrwalla* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1997), pp.184, 191. The only evidence to corroborate this is that contemporary inscriptions repeatedly refer to Ajayapāla by the epithet *niṣkalankāvatara*, the untainted future *avatāra* of Viṣṇu who will appear as the destroyer at the end of the Kaliyuga. See inscriptions of Brahmanwada (1175) and Patan (1199) in G.V. Acharya, *Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat* (Bombay: Sri Forbes Gujarati Sabha, 1933, 1935, 1942), III, no.157B, no. 158. This term is often used in Ismā'īlī traditions to denote the *qā'im* or messiah. See D.-S. Khan, "The Coming of

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In Kumārapāla we have the example of the religious conversion of a single ruler which did not lead to institutional change in the nature of kingship. Subsequently many Jainas became prominent at court, often influencing policy, but no more rulers were converted to Jainism. Meanwhile, there has been little work on how other groups and individuals were converted to Jainism, as they undoubtedly must have been in this period.

The second kind of conversion episode is that of the religious re-affiliation of entire cohesive clans or groups. In stories of this kind, the entire group is impressed by a missionary and agrees to give him their allegiance. It is also seen among merchant or peasant groups. One example of this is the conversion of the Kaṇbīs from Central Gujarat. A group of Kaṇbīs was on their way to Kashi on pilgrimage when they encountered Imām Shāh at Pirana. The *pīr* offered to facilitate their pilgrimage and accordingly, when they awoke the next morning, they found themselves miraculously transported to Kashi. On their return, they pledged their allegiance to the Satpanth.[173] Similar stories appear in the Vaiṣṇava tradition of Vallabhācārya.[174]

Another instance of this kind was the conversion of the Ker clan in Kacch. Formerly Hindus and led by the pious Jām Jakharo Gangā Jaliyo who bathed daily in Ganges water, they were converted to Islam by Bāuddin (Bahā al-Dīn) Pīr, who lived, according to tradition, in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. In the nineteenth century, they retained Rajput names, intermarried with the Jadejas and refrained from dining with other Muslims, but exchanged daughters with the Muslim Pīrzādas of Sind.[175]

The invasion of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's armies at the end of the thirteenth century is associated with several groups' conversion to Islam. One of these was the Kamāliās, worshippers of the goddess Bahucarājī in north Gujarat. Their name derives from the word *kamāl* or perfect, given to their headman on his conversion.[176] One version of the 'conversion' story goes as follows: 'Alā' al-Dīn's army was encamped at Varkhadi in north Gujarat after desecrating the temple of Siddhapur. The goddess Bahucarā produced countless magical chickens which were consumed by the army. In the morning, the goddess took the form of a chicken and crowed, at which the eaten chickens replied and tore their way out of the soldiers' bellies. 'Alā' al-Dīn,

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Nikalank Avatar: A Messianic Theme in Some Sectarian Traditions of North-Western India," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 25 (1997): p.403.

[173] Misra, *Muslim Communities*, p.60.

[174] See Bhagavanji Pranvallabh, *Chaurasi Vaishnavoni Varta* (1881), Girdharilal Hargovinddas Shah and Kalyanji Ranchhodji Vyas, *Basobavan Vaishnavo-ni Varta, (252 anecdotes of Vaishnava devotees for the Pushtimarga sect)* (1902).

[175] Khakhar, *Report on the Architectural and Archaeological Remains in the Provinces of Kachh.*, p.20. Bahā al-Dīn Pir is usually identified with the ṣūfī shaykh Bahā al-Dīn Zakariyya of Multan, a figure often credited with conversions.

[176] Campbell, ed., *Gaz. Muslims*, p.82.

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distressed at the decimation of his army, begged the goddess' forgiveness and promised not to destroy any more temples. As for the chickens which had emerged from the soldiers, the goddess turned them into the cross-dressing and Islamised Kamāliās, whose men were ordered to grow a moustache on one side of their face and to wear bangles on one arm.[177]

A transfer of religious allegiance was also carried out by certain militarised clans, many of whom had a pragmatic affiliation to religion. This includes the Molesalām *garāsiyās*, militarised pastoralists who converted to Islam during the reign of Maḥmūd Begaḍā but retained many Rajput customs. The Molesalām Rāṭhoḍs of Bharuch district, for example, claim they are descended from Yādava Rajputs converted to Islam by Maḥmūd in 1486.[178] Several similar groups had already been converted to varieties of Islam in the fourteenth century. These include the Sammās of Sind and Kacch and branches of the Khokhars, Makvāṇās and Parmārs in Gujarat and Saurashtra.[179]

A third kind of conversion narrative is that of individuals or groups who converted for reasons of personal conviction, career enhancement or as a consequence of military defeat. One such instance is that of the brothers Sādhu and Sahāran, peasants from the Thanesar region who joined Fīrūz Shāh's retinue and converted to Islam. Their descendants were the sultans of Gujarat.[180] Another example is the alleged conversion of Rā Māṇḍalik, the Cuḍāsamā ruler of Junagadh, after his defeat by Maḥmūd Begaḍā: 'The Sultan recited the creed of Islam, the Rao repeated it and saved himself from the flame of the Sultan's wrath which was like the fire of hell.'[181] Although Rā Māṇḍalik may have accepted Islam only after his defeat, he had apparently already been impressed by it: 'After his conversion the Rao used to say: "Before I met the king Shah Shamsuddin Bukhari ... had attracted me towards Islam. Now by the kindness of the Sultan I am exalted by the profession of the faith with the tongue while believing in it with the heart."'[182] There are also some instances of the conversion to Islam of the children or wives of defeated Hindu chieftains. The Paṭāi Rāval of Champaner was defeated and captured in 1483-84, but refused to embrace Islam. After his execution, his son was adopted by one of the sultan's courtiers and brought up as a Muslim, eventually attaining the title of Niẓam al-Mulk.[183]

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[177] Bhudharlal Gangji Bookseller, *Sri Bahucarajino Itihas* (Mehsana-Bahucaraji: Author, 1919), p.12.
[178] Campbell, ed., *Gaz. Muslims*, p.68.
[179] Ibid., pp.65-69.
[180] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, pp.1-3, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.1-2.
[181] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.57.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid., p.67, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.136.

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The more common form of 'conversion' that can be gleaned from the labyrinth of sectarian politics in this period is one of multiple affiliations of a group or leader to a number of sects. One of the commonest ways in which this happened was the accretion of sectarian affiliations along migratory routes which however retain powerful hold over certain lower caste groups. Most of the folk mother goddess affiliations were picked up by various Rajput chieftains in this manner as is evident from the stories of Khodiyar and Ai with respect to the migratory histories of the Sammas. The same was true of cultic affiliations with hero cults of Ramdev or Guga or with certain charismatic Natha holy men. It seems that these affiliations are not so much conversions to one particular faith but the effect of ritualisation of politically or economically pragmatic relationships established with certain social groups that helped set up a kingdom or principality. The cultic organisations could then claim to have 'converted' a military leader on account of the symbolic importance it had in the religious world of pastoralist kingdoms.

The variety of religious choices available inevitably led to competition between adherents and leaders of sects over converts, religious sites and sources of legitimation. This is the main reason for the plethora of tales of contest in the religious literature of the period. Certain sites were particularly potent sources of sanctity. The Girnar hill in the Saurashtra peninsula was one of these. A range of religious groups – Jaina, Śaivite, Nāth, Vaiṣṇava and ṣūfī – established settlements on or near the hill. The Abu hill was also a site long considered sacred. It was the mythical birthplace of the Rajput clans. In the thirteenth century, important Jaina temples were built there and it became one of the most important Śvetāmbara sites of pilgrimage in western India. However, the importance of the site for Hindus meant that there was a contest over space here.

Many conversion narratives include competitions between religious figures. It is interesting that Śaivite yogis are the most common antagonists of both Jaina and Muslim proselytisers. The Nizārī Ismā'īlī preacher, Satgur Nūr faced off against the king's magician, Jāniā *jogi*: he made the temple's stone idol speak and bring water from the tank for the *pīr* to wash his face, then caused the *jogi*'s staff to fly into the air.[184] The processes of interaction between various forms of Hinduism and of Islam are more complex than would be described by either of these categories and little investigation has been done of their 'popular' or 'transitional' forms. The role of Ismā'īlīs in this interaction and their relationship with other cults, pastoralism, untouchables, Tāntrism and the dissemination of information had implications for political formations, especially in Gujarat where it had the maximum variations, reach and political

[184] Misra, *Muslim Communities*, p.11.

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significance over a long period. The *ginān*s of the Ismāʿīlīs have much in common with the emergent Vaiṣṇavism of the fifteenth century in Gujarat, as well as links with Śaiva ascetics and the Nāth *sampradāya* in the tradition of Tāntrik *yoga*, especially among lower castes, before the process of Sanskritisation removed these elements and propelled the tradition towards a firmer Hindu or Sunni identity.

While ṣūfīsm and Ismāʿīlism were two distinct traditions, there are also significant links between them. There has been some study of the role of the ṣūfīs in the interaction with the indigenous religious traditions.[185] While Ismāʿīlīs at times took on ṣūfī garb and terminology to escape persecution, the relation between ṣūfīs and the Ismāʿīlīs has not always been harmonious. Some ṣūfī orders regarded the Ismāʿīlīs as dangerous heretics who should be eliminated. They compelled Nizārī converts to revert to Islam, witnessed in the role of the Bukhārī Shāh ʿĀlam in reconverting the `heretic' tribes of Junagadh and Kacch. By the end of the fifteenth century, there was some decline in the influence of Ismāʿīlīs in Gujarat. Shrines of Ismāʿīlī *pīr*s were taken over, others were appropriated as ṣūfī *pīr*s, as in the instance of Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn being listed in a Suhrawardī hagiography as Ḥasan Daryā. Similarly, Lāl Shāhbāz Qalandar is claimed both by the Suhrawardīs and the Ismāʿīlīs. As the Ismāʿīlīs are rarely present in the sources of Sunnis or Ithnā ʿAshariyyas, it is inferred that '... whenever an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* appeared in a Muslim guise, he was identified with a ṣūfī dervish or a Qalandar'.[186] It is not impossible that some of the early Muslim missionaries to Gujarat were in fact Ismāʿīlīs, for example Shāh ʿAlī Sarmast who rode on a lion and used a snake as a whip, mentioned in the *Tuḥfat al-Qārī* of Manṣūr b. Muḥammad (1707).[187]

For the Ismāʿīlīs, the key became to adapt to the currents of the times – whether this took the form of ṣūfī garb or terminology, local Hindu religious concepts as a translated vocabulary, or secrecy and circumspection. In theory at least, their missionary efforts were secret and individualised and not public or mass.[188] Converts were supposed to be made by 'choosing an influential person belonging to a specific social group who would later convert his fellows.'[189] Preaching was highly organised and texts often used the secret Khojkī script, derived from commercial shorthand, introduced by Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn in the fifteenth century.[190] However, the use of the local idiom and traditional concepts that enabled the Ismāʿīlīs to infiltrate and win believers

[185] Richard M. Eaton, "Sufi Folk Literature and the Expansion of Indian Islam," *History of Religions* 14, no. 2 (1974): p.119.
[186] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p.37.
[187] M.I. Dar, "Gujarat's Contribution to Gujari and Urdu," *Islamic Culture* 27 (1953): p.24.
[188] MacLean, *Arab Sind*, p. 149.
[189] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p. 39.
[190] A.S. Asani, "The Khojki Script: A Legacy of Isma'ili Islam in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107, no. 3 (1987): p.440.

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later led to the decline of their influence when groups rising in the status hierarchy adopted 'orthodox' Sunni or Hindu vocabularies and rituals.

Sect and religion in the sultanate

In Gujarat, religious preachers found themselves facing a frontier region peopled largely by pastoralist groups with multiple sectarian affiliations. Thus the early histories of Ismā'īlī conversion in Gujarat relate conflicts with Nāth or Śaivite yogis and competition with Jainas for the patronage of Caulukya monarchs. What is less clear, however, is that there were links and concordances between Ismā'īlī, Jaina, Śaiva, Nātha and Vaiṣṇava groups in this period. One of the traditions that bring out aspects of these concordances is that of Dattātreya who was claimed in local traditions by each of these groups. In the same vein, the Ismā'īlīs discovered a millenarian Vaiṣṇava tradition amongst the pastoralists of northwestern India and utilised it by positing 'Alī as the Kalki *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. Their *ginān*s made use of the themes from the *Mahābhārata*, especially the *Virāṭa-parva* that is set in Gujarat and associated with Kṛṣṇa.[191] The Sammā genealogy makes clear the links between Ismā'īlism and pastoralist groups claiming descent from some form of Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu.[192]

The complex dynamics of fissioning pastoralist clans in search of territory and wealth in pre-fifteenth century Gujarat made this region ripe for exploitation by sectarian leaders in search of followers and converts. Within pastoralist clan politics, marriage and conquest through alliance could lead to intricate networks of sectarian affiliation. In this phase, sectarian ideologies developed in an ethos of competition and pragmatic alliances between militant pastoralist groups patronising equally militant sectarian groups. Multiple cultic affiliations were therefore commonplace. Certain parties were able to shift allegiances or strike up unlikely mercenary alliances with other groups and thereby changed the sectarian map, while others retained their original affiliations and evolved other sect-based territorial and economic quests. The sectarian history of Gujarat in the fifteenth century is that of communities at various points on this complex maze of clan and sectarian politics.

That the process was deeply contentious, if not always violent, is evident from the sheer proliferation of cults and sects. The relationship between political and religious spheres is made clear by the number of martyrs who became deities and the increasing political power of 'honour' groups such as the bards. Bardic women were raised to godhood based on feats of honour

[191] C. Shackle and Zawahir Moir, *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans* (London: SOAS, 1992; reprint, Revised edition, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000.), pp.103-4.
[192] Elliot and Dowson, *History III*, p.433, Thattawi, *Tuhfat al-Kiram*. The genealogy traces the Sammas to Sāmba, the son of Krsna.

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involving clan rivalries. The displeasure or departure of the bard-goddess could augur bloody defeats for the kingdom that depended on her favour.[193] The millenarian tone of such stories and poetry present a picture of honour-based communities desperate for survival in an unstable ecological zone. Godhood was a result of the intersection of pastoralist codes of honour and the militancy created by clan splitting. The large numbers of saint-warriors who combined healing powers and military valour in this period (the most notable being Rāmdev Pīr) indicate a link between clan politics and religion.[194] The prominence of Nāthpanthī ideologues with their aggressive mix of renunciation and wealth-generating alchemy is another hint of the warrior-ascetic ideals that were required for political success in the present and at the onset of the millenium. The stakes were high and so was the intensity of religiosity. In the more stable fifteenth century, the proliferation of militant cults gave way to more settled shrine and pilgrimage-based religiosity.

As pastoralist groups entered Gujarat, sectarian groups could link themselves to one or another of its branches. Groups such as the Sammās, for example, repeatedly changed their affiliations during their resettlements from Sind to Kacch and Saurashtra when they came into contact with missionaries or local cults. Competing proselytisers tended to invoke each other's terminology. Most groups in this period used simple poetic verses dealing with similar issues to convey their message, differentiated only by sectarian motifs that would be recognisable by adherents.[195] This allowed them to simultaneously disseminate difference and similarity with other sectarian beliefs and customs. What really worked were the 'miracles' that brought practical benefits to the community. A missionary's success in recruiting converts or getting patrons often depended on securing the material and physical well-being of the target clan, lineage or individual. Accordingly, sect leaders were often facilitators of water, wealth and territory or had access to healing and fertility and demonstrated their skill in contests with other proselytisers.

Gujarat was also a religious marketplace in another sense. Here, players could choose from a range of options depending upon their needs. Given the mobile nature of the economy, merchants often had mutiple sectarian affiliations. Jagaḍū's biography shows how many affiliations he accumulated due to the favours done to him by holy men before settling for a respectable Jaina identity towards the end of his life. As a notable of Bhadreshvar, he paid his

[193] See the story of Khodiyar in Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p.78.
[194] See section on Pilgrimage above.
[195] This is one reason for the apparent similarity of religious compositions across sectarian boundaries, often ascribed to 'syncretism'.

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dues by making donations to all the religious institutions of the town, thereby ensuring also that he would have the goodwill of the groups who could assist him in trade and politics.

The notion of a religious marketplace is also demonstrated by the proliferation of sectarian shrines at a site like Girnar in this period. Such clustered shrine-sites were restricted to certain regions or particularly important spots on trade routes. The proliferation of cults in the period under survey is paradoxically a proof of Gujarat's dynamic trading ethos that flourished despite political instability. Over time, cults that had carved out a following by offering a millenarian rhetoric to militant lineages and clans in search of territory and wealth became prosperous and sedentary, shed their millenarian edge and settled down to business. The Satpanthī Ismā'īlīs, for example, restricted proselytisation after the death of Imām Shāh in 1512.[196] The hectic sectarian activity and religious conversion began to die down by the late fifteenth century as the religious map of modern Gujarat was finally settled into place.

The sultans contributed substantially to the stabilisation of the religious marketplace. Most importantly, they put an end to the endless clan fissioning by settling the lineages into stable principalities so that the unstable peripatetic plunder-based pastoralist politics of the pre-fifteenth century that were intimately linked to the sectarian dynamic were now finally subdued. Secondly, by ensuring safe routes they enabled cults to settle down at places where they could expect a regular flow of pilgrims. At important shrine-sites like Somanath and Girnar, the returns from pilgrimage were very substantial indeed. Finally, by regularising trade, they ensured that mercantile communities remained prosperous and could provide sustained patronage to the cults of their choice. This meant that sects did not need any longer to engage in aggressive competition for converts for sheer economic survival. Moreover, city merchants depended on a complex network of trade and affiliations and a civic atmosphere was created within which merchants donated money to institutions belonging to a variety of denominations. Over time, the stabilisation and expansion of a resident population coupled with the dynamic trading ethos would give these institutions long-term stability.

The stabilisation of the religious marketplace paved the way for the rise of Vaiṣṇavism, ṣūfīsm and the ethos of *bhakti*. The genealogy of a notable in the Mansa inscription of 1526 demonstrates the move of a Vāghelā lineage from a pastoralist militant identity towards a mercantile Vaiṣṇava one.[197] This was also when the great Gujarati ṣūfīs established themselves as a logical outcome of the process of settling down and the formation of an imperium in the region.

[196] Campbell, ed., *Gaz. Muslims*, p.41.
[197] Shastri, *HIG*, p.63-64. For details, see Chapter 5, *infra*.

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The ṣūfīs and high Vaiṣṇavism brought prestige of the kind that early Ismā'īlism or the Nāthpanthīs could not offer. Ismā'īlism itself underwent a transformation when the Satpanthis of Pirana established or claimed marital relationships with the sultans. The sultans married into ṣūfī families as well. *Bhakti* as an inter-sectarian ideology was intimately related to the world of the merchant in Gujarat and began to be codified in the form of written texts. The ideology of *bhakti* was in keeping with the multi-ethnic cosmopolitanism of the towns. Thus what might have begun as a militant sectarian ideal to oppose the cultic opponent through a competitive enunciation of ideal devotionalism was finally assimilated into a pragmatic ideology of religious co-existence for the sake of keeping the motors of trade running smoothly. Thus the imputed 'syncretism' of *bhakti* refers to the two phases of cultic religiosity in Gujarat – a phase when the similarities between deities or gods was used to prove that a particular cult was the culmination of all other religious beliefs and another when cults emphasised the sameness of religious beliefs for reasons of maintaining social order.

However, this did not mean that the rest of the cultic spectrum in Gujarat disappeared. On the contrary, cults co-existed in mutiple niches, a scenario made possible by the overall prosperity of the region. In Gujarat, perhaps more than in any other region of pre-modern India, cults had a remarkable propensity to survive and flourish. This is because the wealth from trade allowed various communities to support the cults of their choice. The fifteenth century's stable religious marketplace allowed more information about religious options to circulate in the public domain, through texts, oral compositions, performers and missionaries as villages and towns became linked through better roads and improved security. It was now possible to belong to a dominant religious identity while dabbling in others: the lay followers of syncretic cults made choices of this nature. Women, for example, were now able to patronise fertility cults without the participation of their husbands.[198] People visited shrines with a reputation for curing leprosy or blindness regardless of their other religious affiliations. Over this period it may be noticed that devotion and its manifestation became a cultural trait as more people began to take part in it publicly. While religion had previously been restricted to the royal temple cults on the one hand and the observance of life-cycle rituals in the domestic sphere on the other, it now became increasingly and inclusively public. Festivals were celebrated in public, large numbers of people went on pilgrimage and visited public shrines.

The religious options being offered were over time subsumed within a regional identity. Thus 'imported' options, whether Ismā'īlism from Sind or revivalist Vaiṣṇavism from south

[198] For example, the queen of the ruler of Mevad visited the shrine of Rāmdev Pīr to conceive a child without the knowledge of her husband. Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p.97.

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India, had to be translated into the local idiom, both linguistically and culturally. Religious movements were also now incorporated within the history of the region – thus the goddess Khoḍiyār, the guarantor and protector of the Cuḍāsamās was not just a manifestation of the transregional Śakti but also a figure who was granted a a part in the history of the region.[199] Trans-regional themes were now given a local manifestation and were incorporated into historical narratives. This trend was manifested in the appendices to the *Purāṇas* composed from this period to celebrate and mythologise shrines, temples and priesthoods.[200] By the fifteenth century, religious options operated within a distinctly Gujarati cultural ecumene.

The fifteenth century marks a watershed in the religious history of Gujarat. The older remnants of *paurāṇic* Vaiṣṇavism, courtly Jaina and Śaiva religiosity and Ismāʿīlī sectarian religion were swept away and were replaced by new forms of religiosity. These centred on new forms of temple-building in the Jaina case, *bhakti*-oriented cultic activities in the case of Vaiṣṇavism and more organised Ismāʿīlī and ṣūfī sectarian activities. However, the religious marketplace of the fifteenth century was prosperous enough to accommodate a host of religious affiliations as there was an expansion in the kinds of patrons for religious sects and cults. Indeed, by the fifteenth century, all the major religious organisational streams that proved to be subsequently significant were in place.

The pacification of the Gujarat countryside by the sultans had an enormous impact on the relationship between religion and politics. If the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries was marked by uncertainties of migration, conversion and struggles over resources, the fifteenth century was about the making of a stable polity based on the settling of pastoralist clans and their participation in sultanate politics, the rise of religious activity as a lucrative economic sphere and the interconnections between various regions and economies tilted towards the sultanate centre. The pre-fifteenth century political and religious scenario saw pastoralist bands bearing cultic affiliations move into Kathiavad. This led to violence and competition as the references to clan fission and struggle over cults indicate. By the fifteenth century, the clans had settled down into proto-courtly polities. Correspondingly, conversion and inter-sectarian struggle seem to have been slowed down as well. The bardic literature was finding its way into texts like *Velī Kṛṣṇa Rukmini* that mixed the bardic with the *paurāṇic* and new *bhakti* Vaiṣṇava idioms to

[199] Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p.37.
[200] See Mehta, "Kaumarika Khanda - A Study.", Mehta and Kantawala, "Two legends from the Skanda Purana - a Study."

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legitimise the rise of a courtly Rajput society.[201] Mother-goddess worship was being converted to organised cultic activity and links were being forged with Vaiṣṇava ideology indicating a more flexible clan ideology stressing values of pacification and political power rather than mobile warfare and political brigandage. The parcelling of territories amongst the clans had allowed them to settle down as feudatories of the sultans. Over time the Rajput polities came to control Vaiṣṇava shrines such as the one at Dakor.[202] It is interesting that here Kṛṣṇa is worshipped in the form of Rāṇachodajī – the one who leaves the battlefield – perhaps a remark on the pacification of the Rajputs.

The fifteenth century marks the beginning of a new and more complex religious marketplace in Gujarat that ensued from the pacification of the region. The hallmark of this religious marketplace was organisation towards the unified economic and political context of the sultanate. Cults from this period onwards became increasingly organised at important locations as is apparent from the rise of the Pirana cult of Ismā'īlīs near Ahmadabad, the founding of important ṣūfī shrines or the increased importance of Dvaraka in organised Vaiṣṇava activity. Below these centres were sub-centres of cultic activity that were increasingly brought under the control of organised cultic supervising bodies. In the fifteenth century, Vaiṣṇava shrines in Gujarat were being rendered subsidiary to that of Dvaraka. Later, this phenomenon permitted Raṇachoḍajī of Dvaraka to appear in Dakor as a manifestation of the same godhead in the sixteenth century. The links between the pastoralist clans made the connections between shrines more fruitful in terms of religious patronage and paved the way for the formulation of an interlinked hierarchy of deities under the larger rubric of Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism or Śāktism. Although each clan had its own *kuldevī*, over time, most of them came to be seen as emanations of the transcendent *devi*.

The sultanate conquest of Junagadh opened a new chapter in organised cult activity in the Girnar region. Many of the Purāṇic texts pertaining to the *tīrtha*s – the *Tīrtha mahātmya*s – date to this period.[203] Pilgrimage to Somanath and Dvaraka became easier as the routes to the pilgrimage site had now been pacified. Abu, Shatrunjaya and Girnar formed a pilgrimage circuit for Jainas, one that remains holy even today.

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[201] L.P. Tessitori, ed., *Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajasthan: Velī Krisana Rukamanī rī Rāthorā rāja Prithī Rāja rī kahī*, Bibliotheca Indica (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1919). This fifteenth century text links the mythological story of Krsna and his wife Rukmini to the historical Rajput hero Pṛthvirāja Cauhāṇa, one of the early examples of a Kṛṣṇa legend being used to legitimise a Rajput theme.
[202] F. Mallison, "Development of Early Krishnaism in Gujarat, Visnu-Ranachod-Krsna," in *Devotion Divine: Bhakti traditions from the regions of India: studies in honour of Charlotte Vaudeville*, ed. D. Eck and F. Mallison (Groningen: Paris: Forsten: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991), p.76.
[203] Mehta, "Kaumarika Khanda - A Study," p.45.

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Alongside the organisation of large-scale sectarian activity, the fifteenth century was the most fertile period for the formation of local cultic activities, some of which went on to become trans-local cults of considerable importance. In this period we find cults of heroes such as Rāmdev and Gugā as well as local mother goddess worship cults of Khoḍiyār and Bahucarā amongst countless others. Most important local cults in Gujarat pertaining to pastoralist devotionalism relate back to this period. Over time, these cults were be assimilated into larger Hindu or Islamic devotional frameworks. The mother-goddesses were assimilated into larger networks of Śakta worship and even Vaiṣṇava devotionalism while the heroes would all be seen as emanations of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa.

In every case, shrines benefited from a steep rise in the number of patron groups as a result of pacification and ensuing prosperity that ensued. New social groups like the Pāṭīdārs cleared land under the sultan's peace and began their own cultic activities. The Bhāṭiā merchant group (that had aspirations to Rajput status) assumed a more florid and eroticised style of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* in the late fifteenth century. Similarly, mother-goddess cults were patronised by Rajputs and expressed in bardic poetry. As artisanal, agrarian and military groups became prosperous, they became patrons of various cults. The rise of women as patrons added another level to the patronage of religious activity.

However, the rise of organised religiosity should not lead to the assumption that religious identities were becoming fixed. In the late fifteenth century, the Pāṭīdārs of central Gujarat adopted the new wave of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* as well as the Satpanthī Ismā'īlī sect in Pirana. The Rajputs patronised a range of sectarian activities from Nātha *yogi*s and mother-goddess cults to forms of Vaiṣṇavism. Sects served to organise social functions and groups that were fundamental to the functioning of politics. Thus, if marriage brought in a version of the mother goddess or Kṛṣṇa into a Rajput household, it was politic for the clan leader to patronise the cult in order to signal good political relationships between the families.[204] If soldiers were organised around the worship of mother goddess or if financing of war and conscription were performed by the Nātha yogi then the clan leader had to appear as patron for these cults.[205] Equally, a ṣūfī pir could gain patronage of a Rajput household if he had blessed the women of the house with children or had been responsible for carrying out rituals for bringing rainfall in an arid region.[206] The ṣūfī *pīr*

[204] Harlan, *Rajput Women*, p.76. The fifteenth century Kṛṣṇaite poet Mīrā brought Kṛṣṇa as her personal deity into her marital home. The affinal family first rejected the new deity but were eventually converted. Nancy M. Martin, "Mira Janma Patri and Other Tales of Resistance and Appropriation," in *Religion, Ritual and Royalty*, ed. Rajendra Joshi and N. K. Singhi (Jaipur: Rawat Press, 1999), p.230.
[205] Dalpatram Pranjivan Khakhar, "On the Kanphatas of Dhinodhar," *Indian Antiquary* VII (1878).
[206] Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, p.101.

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could additionally depend on the piety of local villagers to sustain a *khānqah* on an everyday basis. The *malfuz* literature on the lives of the *sufis* is replete with stories that demonstrate the saint's charismatic hold over and economic dependence on local populations.[207] Merchants travelling through difficult terrain often paid obeisance to a variety of cultic configurations.

Moreover, when shrines expanded or changed denominational affiliation, earlier forms of worship were accommodated within the new order. This could happen in two ways. One was the incorporation of the deity into the dominant cosmology as happened with the evolution of Ismā'īlī devotionalism.[208] In the case of ṣūfī belief, the interface with *bhakti* devotionalism is well documented. Or, as in the case of Dvaraka or Dakor, earlier cultic factions were accommodated within the new management of shrines.[209] In Dvaraka, Śaivite Sankaracharyas remained leaders of the *maṭha* (the monastery) while the temple became the centre of Vaiṣṇava devotionalism in Gujarat.[210] Or better still, as in the case of Girnar, a single site could become the literal exemplification of the religious marketplace. The general reputation of the site as a sacred site meant a variety of cults could benefit from the aura of sacrality of the site. A discourse of harmony would have been attractive to pilgrims rather than one of in-fighting and bitterness. Thus it is not surprising that in Girnar, Dattātreya was claimed by Śaivites, Vaiśnavas, Jainas as well as Ismā'īlīs.

The religious marketplace in Gujarat was thus characterised by a mix of the formal organisational and the informal. At the very bottom were small devotional cults restricted to the community context and organised by kinship ties. Above this were levels of sectarian organisation up to the regional cults. Of course, the dominant patronal context made a shrine Jaina, Vaiṣṇava, Ismā'īlī or ṣūfīc, but shrines that transcended particularist affiliation attracted more followers and pilgrims. Often, an extraordinary deed by a charismatic religious leader in matters of childbirth, health or ecological cycles ensured cross-belief patronage and the rise of subsidiary shrines at the local and trans-local levels. For example, while the main shrine of Rāmdev Pīr is in Runicha, countless subsidiary shrines which claim to offer his miraculous powers came up all over Gujarat. The same is true of pirs such as Geban Shāh, Bālā Shāh, Mīrā

[207] Ziya-ud-Din A. Desai, *Malfuz Literature: As a source of Political, Social, and Cultural History of Gujarat and Rajasthan* (Patna: 1991), p.22.
[208] Kassam, *Songs*, p.65.
[209] Mallison, "Development of Early Krishnaism in Gujarat, Visnu-Ranachod-Krsna," p.76.
[210] Pocock, "Guggali," p.325.

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Dātār and so on.[211] The religious marketplace thus consisted of a number of co-existing and overlapping cultic systems that allowed for competition and co-existence.

The economic prosperity of Gujarat in the fifteenth century resulted in a complex religious marketplace that over time developed a discourse of co-existence that is noticeable in the *bhakti* poetry or *ṣūfī* doctrine of the sixteenth century. However, competition was necessary, especially when it came to roping in important patrons or when it came to raising the level of shrine importance through miracles. The politics of the sultanate was related to religion in two ways. Firstly, at a general level, all patrons of regional importance starting from the sultan all the way down to petty feudatory and merchant had to act as patron to a variety of cultic activities that reflected patronage to subordinate power centres – wives, soldiers, artisans, saints, holy men – who ensured the stability of the polity. Secondly, a variety of social groups like the Pāṭīdārs began to appear as patrons of cultic organisation or organised themselves around cults in order to reflect their social and political power in the historical context of the pacification and settlement of fifteenth century Gujarat. The balance between these cults and shrines would always be a negotiated one and sometimes even a precarious one. But as long as the sultans kept the trade routes pacified, opened up new economic vistas and ensured peace and prosperity, this ever-burgeoning religious marketplace would sing their praises and would remain a peaceful one reflecting a political consensus between social groups that made up the sultanate.

Exercising religious options was only possible in a situation where there were many migrants and identities could be reinvented and realigned along the way. This socio-cultural world was obliged to be flexible and accommodative: identities could not be too fixed because the entire edifice of religion, trade and politics was conceptually and institutionally dynamic. But this did not mean that identities were floating or unanchored. From the point of view of the religious individual, it was possible to remain affiliated to various sects while maintaining a dominant religious identity. The sects, on the other hand, could go on believing that they were unified and exclusive. They could not however restrict the movement of their adherents. That need was obviated by the levels of prosperity they could achieve by serving the sultanate's ideology of trade. For the Gujarat sultans in the fifteenth century, the question was to determine how this complex and dynamic society could be regulated, pacified and administered without losing the dynamism that generated its prosperity. This question will be dealt with in the final chapter.

[211] Trivedi, *Fairs*, Table I.

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Chapter 5 **Court and state: evolution of a regional consensus, c. 1390-1511**

How did the sultans of Gujarat achieve a court society? What was the nature of the consensus they presided over? What kind of administration was introduced, what were its traditions and innovations? How did sultanate institutions change the political order?

By the early fifteenth century, the Delhi sultanate hardly existed. While it had great prestige in name, and the sultan of Delhi was still the ruler of Hind, in actuality it was no better than a provincial kingdom and poorer in resources than the sultanates of the Deccan and Gujarat. The Gujarat sultanate differed from earlier state formations in many ways: the size of the kingdom, bringing about unity where there had been multiple foci of political authority and facilitating connectivity within the region and with the world outside. In particular, it was successful in bringing Gujarat into the wider field of north Indian politics and culture. It was the site for the formation of a regional linguistic culture as well as a deepening and diversifying literary culture that was evolving a variety of new genres and registers. Finally, it facilitated more extensive trading networks than ever before.

The state depended for its prosperity on the prevalence of trade but there was a continuing tension between mobility and settlement. As described in Chapter 2, the early sultans built widely but had to keep moving to ensure that the trade routes and strategic forts were well secured. They needed to establish general security to enable the population to be mobile and productive, hence roads had to be kept safe and groups had to be induced to clear and move into new territories and live in the new forts and settlements. The sultans presided over a loose but functional system of alliances. In the fifteenth century, they were able to enforce this system because of access to military resources and their ability to be recruiters and employers. The revenues from trade permitted them to be among the most munificent employers of manpower in South Asia. However, the social and political consensus they presided over was not entirely sustained by military threat. It was also borne in upon traders, military and landed intermediaries and religious figures that it was in their interest to support the sultanate and in effect, the region to which they belonged.

The dominance of the marketplace allowed groups to negotiate their social and political identities and express them in cultural forms. Moreover, the mobility and diversity of the economy allowed players to choose more freely: people could bargain better since they had some

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choice in opting for more advantageous clients or patrons. However, trade was a fragile system and monetary and commodity networks required flexible arrangements between partners. Paradoxically, the very fragility of trade may have contributed to a relatively stable polity in Gujarat because so much was at stake. As the sultans could raise the stakes and make the system so lucrative for so many, the polity was simultaneously more flexible and more stable than elsewhere.

We find here that the regional identity of Gujarat did not come about through recourse to homogeneous ethnic or cultural values. Instead, it came together despite multiple group interests that functioned with a degree of flexibility and unison that allowed the state to survive. In other regions, this political reality tended to be masked by other processes. Thus in Kākatīya Warangal, the weak literary cultures of the non-brahmanical groups allowed brahmanical culture to emerge as hegemonic by default.[1] In Gujarat, political and cultural power that non-brahmana communities derived from trading wealth allowed multiple voices to be heard simultaneously and yet in dialogue with one another.

The army and military control

One complaint against Farḥat al-Mulk, the last governor of Tughluqid Gujarat before Ẓafar Khān, was that he was friendly with the locals and tolerated idolatry.[2] While this may have been a retrospective smear to discredit him, it shows at least that he was becoming a threat on account of the fact that he had set down local roots. All the sources report that a section of the populace was discontented and had complained to Delhi about him. A delegation also came to complain to Ẓafar Khān who had been sent out from Delhi and was encamped near Nagaur. According to Firishta, Farḥat al-Mulk had an army of ten to twelve thousand men, mostly Hindus. On receiving information about this force, Ẓafar Khān was obliged to raise an army locally (in north Gujarat) and enlisted four thousand cavalry.[3] Although Farḥat al-Mulk joined battle with Ẓafar Khān's forces near Patan, he was soon defeated and killed.

What happened to the army subsequently? Vital to the success of the Gujarat sultans, the army was perhaps the most important segment of the administration. How were the sultans able to organise it, recruit and pay soldiers and arrange for military supplies?

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[1] See Talbot, *Andhra*.

[2] According to Firishta, Farhat al-Mulk 'became desirous of establishing his independence; and in order to gain popularity for the furtherance of that object, he encouraged the Hindoo religion, and thus rather promoted than suppressed the worship of idols.' Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.1. Sikandar mentions only that he had rebelled and that there were complaints about his tyranny. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.5.

[3] Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.2. None of the other sources indicate that Zafar Khan left Delhi with a substantial army.

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Ẓafar Khān's ability to rapidly raise local levies bears out the observation that north India possessed thousands of fighting peasants and professional soldiers in search of employment in this period.[4] After the initial successful battle against Farḥat al-Mulk, he went about consolidating his forces. In 1394, news arrived that Muḥammad Shāh, the sultan of Delhi, had died. Soon after this, he heard that the chieftain of Idar had 'placed his foot outside the circle of obedience and fealty.'[5] He was again obliged to assemble an army with fighting men and elephants to besiege the fort of Idar. The troops proceeded to plunder the countryside around Idar, eventually leading the chieftain to sue for peace.

By now a fighting force had been assembled and Ẓafar Khān made a rapid campaign to Saurashtra by way of Jhalavad along the route running west of Patan. He overran the chieftaincies of Jhalavad and Junagadh and compelled the payment of tribute, then marched to Somanath, where he destroyed the temple, built mosques and established a military post. The following year, the army had to be reassembled to take on another siege, this time in Mandalgarh after the ruler had failed to pay tribute and had, during Farḥat al-Mulk's reign, expelled the Muslims from his territories.[6] As Kolff has pointed out, it is misleading to search for a standing army in this period: Niẓām al-Dīn relates that again on this occasion, 'Ẓafar Khan collected the army of Gujrat'.[7] The army was convened from armed peasants and professional soldiery whenever the need arose. In order that his peasant soldiery could return to their lands at the end of the campaigns of the past three years, Ẓafar Khān ordered that his troops should be excused from service for a year.[8]

In 1403, Ẓafar Khān called back his army, distributing a year's pay among them, to march on Idar again.[9] The chieftain fled and Ẓafar Khān was able to install a military post in the fort. Soon after this was another campaign towards Somanath, where the 'Hindus and *kafirs*' had regrouped.[10] On the advance of Ẓafar Khān's army, the local forces, probably led by the Vājā chieftain Bharam or Brahmadāsa, met them 'by way of the sea'.[11] They were defeated and retreated to the island fort of Diu, which was also taken after a few days siege.

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[4] Kolff, *Naukar*, p.98.
[5] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.177.
[6] Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.3.
[7] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.178-9, Kolff, *Naukar*, p.44.
[8] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.180.
[9] Ibid., p.181.
[10] According to Sikandar, this was in 1397-98. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.7.
[11] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.181. Epigraphic records indicate that Vājā chieftains controlled the territory around Somanath although the port town was probably run by merchant groups as it had been in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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In 1403, Ẓafar Khān's son, Tātār Khān, demanded an army to intervene in the unsettled politics of Delhi. When his father relented and made over the army to him, Tātār Khān assumed the title of Sultan Muḥammad Shāh, rewarded courtiers and collected a large army to march towards Delhi, but before he had gone very far, he suddenly died. Ẓafar Khān then assumed royal titles in 1407.

When Aḥmad Shāh became sultan in 1411, it is clear that a number of employers were in contention for the large pool of manpower that was available in Gujarat. These included courtiers of the former governor, Afghan mercenaries as well as local chieftains. Soon after his accession, Aḥmad Shāh faced a challenge from a relative who was supported by Afghans and Hindu chieftains. When they were defeated, their army came over to him.[12] Over the next decade, the troops of defeated rivals began to come into his employment as his campaigns demonstrated that he was emerging as the most successful warlord of the region. His only challengers now were the sultans of Malwa and the Deccan and hill-chieftains who possessed a military advantage through their control of strategically located forts.

From about 1425, Aḥmad Shāh introduced a regularised system of pay for his soldiers: half in cash and half from grants of land in their native territories. According to the seventeenth-century writer Sikandar, the reason for this was that if the pay had been all in cash, as while paying mercenaries from other regions with no ties to the land, it would not last and moreover, 'the soldiers would be badly equipped and careless in protecting the country'. However, 'if half the pay were given by a grant of land (*jāgīr*) from that grant they (the soldiers) would obtain grass, firewood, milk and butter-milk and if they engaged in agriculture and building houses they would derive profit and would strive to protect the country with their heart and life.'[13] This had the additional advantage that itinerant soldiers would be induced to settle and cultivate waste land. Several other provisions were made which ensured that :

- Soldiers would receive the cash component of their pay monthly and without delay wherever they might be posted. This would ensure that they would remain at their posts and if called up for active duty, would not be obliged to borrow money.
- If soldiers were on a distant expedition and the revenues from their lands could not reach them, they could draw half their pay in cash from the treasury. This would ensure that they would not be obliged to borrow money to obtain weapons, and would also allow their families to subsist on the proceeds of their lands.

[12] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.11.
[13] Ibid., p. 20.

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- The treasurer should be one of the royal slaves while the paymaster was a free man 'in order that they may not combine and stretch forward the hand of treasury and peculation.'[14] The same means of preventing corruption was also extended to the *'āmils* or district revenue officials.

Later, Maḥmūd improved on these provisions by ensuring that the *jāgirs* granted to his soldiers would pass on to the descendants of those who were killed in service. 'Whoever had a jagir it was confirmed to his son and he who left no son, half of his jagir was given to his daughter, and he who left no daughter had his dependents provided for in a fitting manner.'[15] He also ensured that his soldiers never had to borrow money at interest and appointed a separate treasurer to advance money to whoever needed it.[16]

These arrangements for soldiers were among the factors that made the sultans of Gujarat among the most generous employers of the time.[17] They also ensured the soldiers' loyalty against rival employers such as rebellious courtiers and Rajput chieftains. These measures proved to be a profitable investment in the long term. According to Sikandar, revenue assessors during the reign of Bahādur Shāh found that returns from these districts had in some cases increased tenfold and in no case were they less than double.[18]

A number of Arab and Abyssinian mercenaries and adventurers found employment at the Gujarat court, more here than in north India where Persian, Afghan and Central Asian mercenaries were more common. Most importantly, the sultans were able to command allegiance from several chieftains and their clans, from professional mercenaries, some of foreign origin and others who were soldiers recruited from peasant or landed communities by generous gift-giving and the lavishness of their resources.

Military resources were the sultans' trump card. They had the advantage of being able to secure supplies of war horses from the overland route from Central Asia as well as by the sea route. There is a reference in Sikandar to Khurāsānī merchants bringing Iraqi and Turkish horses to sell in Gujarat.[19] The Kāṭhī horses of Saurashtra were also reckoned highly.[20] With the

[14] Ibid., p.21.
[15] Ibid., p.64.
[16] Ibid., p.47.
[17] Kolff, *Naukar*, p.65.
[18] Misra and Rahman, eds., *MS*, p.58, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.21. According to the *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*, after the reign of Muẓaffar II (1511-1525), the army increased in size and courtiers began to permit revenue-farming on their lands. This produced much higher returns, but as a consequence, the careful checking of accounts was abandoned, leading to confusion. James Bird, *Medieval Gujarat, Its Political and Statistical History* (London: 1835), p.192, Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.210.
[19] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans,* Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS.*

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immense resources from their prosperous province the sultans could import war elephants from Malwa and as far off as Ceylon.[21] The fifteenth century was the period when the war elephant became crucial to army strategy and the rise to prominence of the Malwa sultans and the Gajapatis (Lords of the Elephants) of Orissa was due in large measure to their access to areas where wild elephants could be captured and trained. The long tussles that the Malwa sultans waged for the control of areas such as Kherla, Jājnagar, Sarguja and Gondwāna were almost solely due to the abundance of wild elephants found in these forested areas.[22] According to the *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*, elephants were also to be found in the mountainous region between Gujarat and Malwa.[23]

They were also able to secure supplies of swords and other weaponry. Gujarati swords were well known even in the Arab world but Maḥmūd Begaḍā possessed a wide range of weaponry. Other weapons were used too. Firishta reports that during the siege of Mandalgarh in 1395, Ẓafar Khān used battering rams and catapults and had underground passages dug to force entry into the fort.[24]

On occasion, the sultans could commandeer boats and engage in warfare by sea too, eventually becoming known as Lords of the Sea.[25] The first instance of an engagement by sea was during Ẓafar Khān's second campaign to Somanath and Diu when the local chieftains attacked by sea and then were beaten back to the island of Diu. Nicolò Conti who visited Cambay in Aḥmad Shāh's reign said that Cambay shared in equipping the fleet of the Gujarat kingdom and that Aḥmad Shāh is mentioned as having sent seventeen vessels to recover the islands of Bombay and Salsette that had been seized by the Bahamanis in 1429.[26] Later, Maḥmūd Begaḍā also conducted several naval campaigns. He was able to call up boats from his ports for an expedition to finish off the pirates of the Dvaraka region and made them 'chase and capture the vessels of the enemy'.[27] Soon after, he sent out vessels to punish Malabar pirates who had been harassing the ports of Gujarat.[28] He was thus able to secure boats even away from the areas of direct influence. In 1507-8, there was the famous naval battle at Chaul in which the flotilla commanded by Malik Ayāz, assisted by boats sent by the last Māmluk sultan of Egypt, Qansauh al-Ghauri and the

[20] Desai, *Saurashtra-no Itihas (History of Saurashtra)*, p.76.
[21] Digby, *War Horse*, p.61.
[22] Ibid., pp. 72-73. citing Battuta, *Rehla*, p.77.
[23] Khan, *MA Supplement, trans.*, p.118.
[24] Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.3.
[25] Bayley, *Local Muhammadan Dynasties of Gujarat*, p.386. The Sangars of Kacch were known for their skill in ship-building during the sultanate. Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p. 75.
[26] Major, ed., *India*, p.28.
[27] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p. 62.
[28] Ibid., p.63.

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Ottoman governor of Bahrayn, defeated the Portuguese – their only defeat in Indian waters. In the sixteenth century, the sultan of Gujarat was called the Lord of the Sea.[29]

Iconoclasm

While Muslim iconoclasm and political control are the usual reasons offered for the decline in monumental temple architecture, it may be noticed that there had been a fall in temple building throughout the thirteenth century. What is more interesting, however, is the abrupt disappearance, in the wake of the Turkish invasion, of the Caulukya model of grants for the upkeep of temples and monasteries. The fact that an entire bureaucratic system and language of parcelling out land could be wiped away before the sultanate armies had captured a dozen towns may indicate that the land-grant system as well as Caulukya/Vāghelā sovereignty were only a rhetorical fiction by the late thirteenth century.

As Richard Eaton has pointed out, temple desecrations were usually political acts. As was the case during the Khaljī invasion of Gujarat, they 'typically occurred on the cutting edge of a moving military frontier.'[30] The generals were usually well informed about what temples to target, in this case going for the royal temples in Anhilvada Patan, Siddhpur and Somanath, bringing down the shell and removing or destroying the icons within. Although the Jaina temple complex of Shatrunjaya was also desecrated, the governor of Gujarat, Alp Khān, soon realised that alienating the prosperous Jaina community had been an impolitic act and made provision for its reconstruction.

Once political power had been established, there are no further instances of desecration until the end of the fourteenth century, by which time independent chieftains throughout Gujarat and Saurashtra had been consolidating their territories and building temples. As the last governor, Ẓafar Khān, proceeded to re-establish sultanate rule over Gujarat, he again targeted the royal temples of chieftains such as those of Idar, Junagadh and Diu as well as Somanath, the destruction of which bore ideological weight for both Muslims and Hindus.

Subsequently too, political factors predominated when the Gujarat sultans attacked temples: '... wherever any one was headstrong he (Aḥmad Shāh) cast down his stronghold, and he overthrew temples and built mosques in their stead...'[31] Aḥmad Shāh was particularly zealous in this regard. According to Firishta, he appointed a courtier, Malik Tuḥfa Tāj al-Mulk, to destroy

[29] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p. xiv.
[30] Eaton, "Desecration," p.108.
[31] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.17.

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temples and establish Muslim authority throughout Gujarat.[32] As a result of his exertions, it is not stated that 'idol temples' ceased to exist but that the local political units 'mehwās' and 'girās' were no longer heard of.[33]

If a chieftain was willing to be cooperative, accept sultanate overlordship and become an ally, the temples in his territories were not harmed. In the case of a Hindu chieftain of Sirohi who asked Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad for assistance in recovering the fort of Abu, the sultan campaigned against Rāṇā Kumbha and restored him to his lands. Again, Rā Māṇḍalik of Junagadh was permitted to rule his territories until he became 'arrogant' and visited his temples 'in great state and with a golden umbrella over him.'[34]

Richard Eaton's path-breaking article documenting instances of temple desecration and analysing them probably underestimates the number of 'desecrations' in Gujarat from our period. While he rightly lists only those instances clearly documented in the Persian chronicles or inscriptions, there were probably a handful of others that are less well documented. (see Table 3) There was a clear sense among Hindu chieftains that setting up a royal temple would be seen as a gesture of insubordination that could lead to violent consequences. One epigraph of 1417-18 from the mountainous region near Bharuch makes this clear. It records the building of a temple by one Vīj in the reign of king Śaktisiṃha who ruled over a town named Vāpī on the peak of the Vindhya mountain that was hidden from the coming *yavana-bala* (the Muslim forces).[35] In some cases, the 'infidels' did win back a captured temple. An inscription of 1430 from Vijapur in north Gujarat mentions that the building was originally built by Hindus. After the establishment of

[32] The destruction of (rival) temples was carried out by Hindu rulers too. Chattopadhyaya cites the *Rājatarangini* on the 'appointment of a *devotpāṭaṇanāyaka*, an officla in charge of uprooting images of gods from temples and of confiscation of temple property, by an early medieval ruler of Kashmir.' Chattopadhyaya, *Making*, p.201, citing Rajatarangini, vol.VII, pp.1146-48.

[33] Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.10. According to Commisariat, 'The term 'gras' (lit. a mouthful) has been used from time immemorial throughout Gujarat and Kathiawar to indicate the lands and villages given for their subsistence to junior members of the Rajput ruling families that came and settled down in the land, and these cadets came to be called 'grasias' or 'garasias'. In course of time *gras* came to mean a hereditary landed patrimony, large or small, and even to-day it is the commonest word in Kathiawar in connection with land administration. In the decline of Mughal power during the eighteenth century, when the Maratha incursions were in operation, the term acquired for a time another connotation, and came to signify, under the form of *toda-gras*, the blackmail which turbulent robber chiefs levied from villages exposed to their attacks as the proce of their protection and forbearance.' M.S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat,1297-8 to 1573 AD*, 2 vols., vol. I (Longmans Green and Co., 1938), pp.80-81. Also see Desai, *Glossary of Castes, Tribes and Races in the Baroda State*, vol.II, p.102, *Kathiawar*, pp.315-26.

[34] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.55.

[35] Shastri, *HIG*, no. 107.

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Muslim rule, it was used as a place of prayer by the Muslims, was destroyed by the Hindus thereafter and was renovated by Sarkhail Bahādur.[36]

Revenue and administration

The ostensible reason for sending Ẓafar Khān to replace Farḥat al-Mulk as governor of Gujarat was that the latter had 'spent the revenue of a number of years of the *khāliṣa* lands of the Sultan, for his own needs and purposes, and had not remitted one *dīnār* to the treasury.'[37] He was urged, accordingly, to deliver whatever was left of the *khāliṣa* revenues to Ẓafar Khān and then proceed to Delhi. Ẓafar Khān's task was to reclaim control over *khāliṣa* or crown-controlled lands and collect their revenues. Although he succeeded in establishing a tenuous military control over most of urban eastern Gujarat, many of the defeated minor chieftains of the region turned to plunder and robbery on being deprived of their lands.

When Aḥmad Shāh came to the throne in Patan, his first act was to confirm the administration in its position: 'he conferred honours on the nobles and the chief men of the kingdom, the great men of the city and the chiefs of various groups; and gave a share of his gifts to all sections of the people.'[38] He also reinforced the established administration: 'He kept the officers and writers charged with matters connected with the revenue in their former positions; and made great exertions in the matter of increasing the cultivation, and in the building up of the country and the administration of justice.'[39] However, he was still faced with controlling the rebellious dispossessed chieftains of the region. 'Anarchy increased, confusion prevailed, the decay of cultivation became visible, and the ryots were distressed.'[40]

According to the *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*, Aḥmad Shāh was responsible for the origin of the *vāṇṭā* system of revenue collection in which chieftains who had been defeated were restored partial control of their lands. The *vāṇṭā* or 'part' was one-fourth of the land that the chieftain had formerly controlled. The other three-fourths were adjudged crown property. This system was created to pacify defeated chieftains who were becoming rebellious and plundering roads and villages:

> Those whose duty it was to advise, in their foresight put an end to these calamities, and exacted from the zamindar of every village security to discontinue his opposition. Three parts of the land of each village, under the denomination of *tal pat*, were acknowledged as the property of the king, and one

[36] Desai, *Inscriptions*, no.2144.
[37] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.175.
[38] Ibid., p.189.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Forbes, *Ras Mala*, vol.II, p.270.

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> portion was given to the zamindars under the denomination of *wanta*, and they were engaged to furnish guards and protection to their own villages and were to hold themselves in readiness for the service of the king whenever called upon. As these people, without paying obedience to the prince, did not see it possible to establish themselves, they attended to make their submission and engaged to pay the crown a *salami* from their *wanta*. From this time 'salami', and 'peshkash' became established against them.[41]

This arrangement enabled the sultans to claim a large portion of the captured territories to be directly administered while the rest were controlled by chieftains who had been rendered submissive and agreed to pay tribute from the proceeds of their lands. Some of these converted to Islam and were guaranteed their possessions on payment of a tribute.[42] The system also ensured that the sultans had a loyal or contracted base in the countryside from which to draw military manpower.

There were still several chieftains who had not been alienated from their lands. The territory controlled by these chieftains was called the *grās* or 'mouthful', from which the term *grāsiyā* or *garāsiyā*, often used for chieftains before the sixteenth century popularity of the term 'Rajput', was derived.[43] They were nominally subject to the payment of an annual tribute which often had to be extracted by force often extracted personally by the sultans.[44] The sultans did not interfere with internal administration within the chieftains' territories. They continued to collect revenues from the land, usually in kind, as well as other cesses and dues from trade and transit.

Directly administered territories, from where the local chieftain had been comprehensively alienated, were administered in two ways. From Aḥmad's time, but more so during the reign of Maḥmūd Begaḍā, territories were assigned to courtiers to administer as military assignments or *iqṭā'* from which they were also expected to raise troops. Alternatively, a paid official would be stationed in the chief town or fort of the region to administer it and collect revenues, supported by troops sent from Ahmadabad. In addition, military outposts or *thānas* were set up in charge of subordinate officers who were also responsible for raising local levies.

These territories were assigned a hierarchy of officials responsible for collecting the state's share of the produce with the help of village headmen or other intermediaries. They also produced reports on the collections which were sent to the treasury officer and accountant who were, on Aḥmad Shāh's orders, alternately a free man and a slave so that their interests would not coincide and lead to dishonesty.

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[41] Ibid., vol.II, pp. 270-1.
[42] Ibid., vol.II,p. 270.
[43] There are several explanations of the term 'gras' and 'garasiya'. Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.89.
[44] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, pp. 118-9.

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In territories granted to courtiers as *iqṭā'*, the proceeds of the land were expected to support the courtier and his contingents of troops for a fixed duration. However, many of these military grants or *jāgīr*s became long-standing holdings of the courtiers in question, at times becoming hereditary too. There are instances of Maḥmūd confirming the son of a courtier in his father's rank and military territories.[45] Military assignees were prevented from over-taxing their territories by appointed civil officials who also assisted in administration.[46] The policy of granting long-term *iqṭā'*s and *jāgīr*s encouraged courtiers to put down roots and develop economic interests in the regions under their control. In the fifteenth century, this parcelling out of authority did not give rise to significant dissidence against the sultan.

The settlement of land was instrumental in the stabilisation of that other source of wealth – trade. An inscription struck in 1525 to mark the construction of a stepwell by Dhārājī, a notable from Mansa in north Gujarat, provides an idea of the process by which erstwhile marauding pastoralist groups were settling down to a mercantile identity by the fifteenth century.[47] Given that the donor Dhārā had adult grandchildren in 1525, it can be safely assumed that he belonged to a generation that was active under the sultanate of the fifteenth century. The inscription, which begins by acknowledging the auspicious reign of Muẓaffar Shāh II, is partially in Sanskrit verse and the rest follows in Gujarati prose. It lists the descendants of a junior or allied branch of the erstwhile military-pastoralist family of the Vāghelās who had ruled Gujarat in the thirteenth century. The text is long and well-formulated and indicates a literate culture and audience.

The composition of this history of a minor clan in Sanskrit verse is a legitimising gesture by an upwardly mobile clan with a pastoralist past. The clan had settled in Mansa in north Gujarat (they earlier belonged to the village of Uganij) and was in 1525 a prosperous family. In a Sanskrit quartet in the middle of the inscription, Dhārā claims to be devotee of Hari (Viṣṇu) and a warrior and king. Another verse in Sanskrit indicates that he was also a prosperous merchant of the town. This verse praises the sea and honours Varuṇa, the sea-god, as the guarantor of his well-being, indicating that his wealth was achieved through the sea-trade. However, the family seems to have aligned itself seamlessly with other sectarian groups too. The names of Dhārā's sons from one wife – Mīyā Śrī Phatūlā, Keṣṇājī, Bhābhujī, Arjanjī and Bhīmjī – are a combination of Vaiṣṇava and Islamic names. One grandson from Dhārā's daughter Rājbāī is named Malik Śrī Nijāmal Malik Savāī, clearly a rendering of a sultanate title. The sons from his other wife have clearly Vaiṣṇava names : Rāmjī, Lakhmaṇjī and Nārāyaṇjī. Given that Dhārā is a devotee of Hari and his

[45] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.65.
[46] Campbell, ed., *Gazetteer*, p.211.
[47] Shastri, *HIG*, pp.63-66.

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offspring are named after *avatāra*s of Viṣṇu, it is clear that he was claiming a Vaiṣṇava identity. This did not prevent at least one son and a daughter being allied to a Muslim identity.[48] Here a pastoralist group seems to be staking a claim for higher ritual and cultural status as chieftain, merchant and Vaiṣṇava. However, the route to this status is two-fold: through Dhārā's own success as a merchant with the blessings of Varuṇa and through the employment of his offspring as servants of the sultans.

The inscription brings together the themes being discussed in this and the previous chapter – the stabilisation of pastoralist clans under the sultanate – which, in this case, is linked to the point made in the previous chapter of the stabilisation of sectarian identities under formal institutionalised cults like Vaiṣṇavism. Indeed, it is in this period that a turbulent region like Kacch, home to many pastoralist military groups, settled down to a courtly society under the Jāḍejās, the fortunes of which were related to the rise of the great port of Mandavi.

Step-well inscriptions from the later part of Maḥmūd Begaḍā's reign indicate a growing link between the state, pastoralist chieftains and trade.[49] Most step-well inscriptions struck by traders do not fail to mention the chieftain in charge of the locality and the reign of the sultan in which the well was built. One such inscription that survives was struck in 1480 in Sanskrit and Gujarati and comes from Gosa in Porbandar taluka.[50] The inscription records the building of a step-well by Munjā, son of Sūrā of the *vāniā* caste, in the reign of Sultan Maḥmūd and during the time of the Jethva ruler Vikramait. Two years later, four Sanskrit inscriptions were struck in a well in Rampura in Wadhwan district that record the reign of Sultan Maḥmūd (*pātasā śrī Mahimūda*) as well as that of the local chief Rāṇā Vāghjī in addition to mentioning the officers in charge of the district – Parmār Lakhdhīr, Parmār Hādā and *Khānśrī* Alūkhān. The well was built by Rāṇībāī and Valhāde, wives of the merchant Vīṇā of the Śrīmāla caste and resident of Jhanjhnagar (Jhinjhuvada). In this inscription, a picture emerges of the adminstrative hierarchy – from Rajput or Muslim official upwards through the local Rajput overlord to the sultan – that was being acknowledged for facilitating the wealth made by a merchant. It also reflects the way in which the Rajput clans were being accommodated within the administrative and fiscal hierarchies of the sultanate.

This mode of inscription-making, mostly on the walls of step-wells, continued throughout the remaining reign of Maḥmūd and during the reign of his successors. A 1482 step-well

[48] Mīyā Śrī Phatūlā's wife was Bībī Śrī Lālājī and their sons had Islamic names: Alījī, Rājejī and Cāndajī. Ibid., pp.64-65.
[49] See section on Architecture and Politics in Chapter 2, *supra*.
[50] Diskalkar, *IK*, no.85.

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inscription of Cambay struck by Dhanad, a Mer, begins by praising the reign of the sultan, yet again demonstrating the conversion of erstwhile militant pastoralist groups into urban notables during the reign of Maḥmūd.[51] An inscription in Arabic from 1495 describes Somanath as having been converted into a Muslim city and records the building of a mosque by Hamīr, son of Rāwat, a 'humble slave' of the governor.[52] A step-well inscription in Sanskrit of 1498 from Bhoj in Baroda district gives a list of donors that includes Kāja from the Cāhamāna lineage, variously described as merchant and king, and merchants from mercantile castes, their wives and daughters.[53] Kāja seems to have been charge of at least 84 villages that were under the administration of Bhūpanārāyaṇ, a minister described as a 'wise trader from the Disāval caste'. As in the case of Dhārā in the 1525 inscription, this is an example of how a 'princely' Rajput chieftain was, by the end of the fifteenth century, a trader with administrative and revenue-collecting powers. The mention of a minister and other notables of the 'estate' shows how the sultans had left the administrative structure of such areas to the clans. As long as the revenues were ploughed back into the development of the sultanate, local systems were left untouched.

In 1499, one of the most famous step-wells of Gujarat, the Adalaj *vāv* near Ahmadabad, was built under the patronage of Rāṇī Rūḍādevī, wife of another Vāghelā chieftain.[54] The inscription (mostly in Sanskrit with a few lines in Gujarati) records the building of the well at a cost of five lakh *ṭankās*. Significantly, the inscription records the lineages of both her husband's and father's family but does not fail to mention the reign of Maḥmūd Begaḍā. The Rajput clans seem to have accepted the role of arbiters of the sultanate economy that was burgeoning due to the rapid expansion of trade especially during Maḥmūd Begaḍā's reign. The step-well inscriptions come from all over Gujarat and show the ubiquity of the process of accomodating erstwhile pastoralist clans into the new economy. The fifteenth century had thus seen the pacification of militant pastoralist groups, the Rajputs of the future, and their settlement into an accomodative triangular relationship between the sultan, the trader and the chieftain. In certain areas, as seen from the example of Dhārā and Kājā, the roles of merchant and chieftain were hardly distinguishable.

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[51] Pravin Chandra Parikh and Bharati Shelat, *Gujarat-na Abhilekho: Svadhyay ane Samiksha (Inscriptions of Gujarat: Study and Analysis)* (1991), pp. 94-101, B.J. Shastri, *Buddhiprakash* 77, no. 1 (1930): pp. 27-32, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 14-15.
[52] *Bhavanagari*, pp. 28-30.
[53] M. N. Katti, ed., *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1986-87* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1998), R.N. Mehta and S.G. Kantawala, *Svadhyaya* XVI (1979): pp. 192-196, Shastri, *HIG*, no. 19A.
[54] Burgess and Cousens, *Rev. List*, pp. 301-11, Shastri: pp. 19-23.

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Alliance, marriage and legitimation

The story of the brothers Sādhu and Sahāran and the promise of the kingdom of Gujarat to their descendants is related in the *Mir'āt-i-Sikandarī*. The brothers were inhabitants of a village in the *qaṣba* of Thanesar. Once, when Sultan Fīrūz Shāh of Delhi was a prince, he had been hunting in the region and had become separated from his companions. As night fell, he spied a village and approaching, saw several men sitting on its outskirts. The prince alighted and asked one of the men to pull off his boots. This man happened to be gifted in the science of physiognomy and foretold future greatness for the stranger from the lines on his feet, declaring that he was either a king or would shortly become one. The sultan spent the night in the brothers' home where their sister caught his fancy and a marriage was soon contracted.

Sādhu and Sahāran attached themselves to the prince's retinue and followed him to the capital. Eventually, they converted to Islam and Sahāran received the title of Wajih al-mulk. Shortly after, the brothers became disciples of the saint Makhdūm-i-Jahāniān, who prophetically promised the kingdom of Gujarat to Ẓafar Khān, the son of Wajīh al-mulk, to reward him for providing food for the dervishes at his abbey.

> The saint sent for the donor Muzaffar Khan, who, coming, kissed the ground before him the saint said: "Oh! Muzaffar Khan, the return for this feeding of my derwishes is the kingdom of the whole of Gujarat which in reward of this handsome deed, I grant thee. May it be auspicious to thee!" ... Muzaffar brought his forehead to the ground and made obeisance. Returning home happy and joyous he recounted his adventure to his wife, a woman of sharp wit and solid sense. She heard his account with pleasure, but said : "thou art now verging on old age – if thou attainest to the rule of Gujarat – how long wilt thou reign? So hie back the presence of the saint and tell him to pray that, the kingdom may continue in thy family for generations. Today the sun of the kindness of the saint hath dawned on thee, and I doubt not, but that whatever request thou makest shall be complied with." Muzaffar Khan went forth with delicate perfumes, sweet smelling flowers, delicious fruits, and pretty betel-leaves and placed them before the holy man, who pleased at this elegant tribute, said : "Thou hast brought us perfumes!" He gave a handful of dates from out of the tray presented by Muzaffar to him, saying :- "According to the number of these dates, shall thy children rule over Gujarat !" Some say the number of dates was twelve or thirteen; others that it was not more than nine or ten. God knows best.[55]

This story provides the sultans of Gujarat with two significant legitimising forces – a marriage alliance and employment with the Delhi sultan followed by the blessings of a prominent ṣūfī. This is just as well, because the brothers had a rather ambiguous origin in the community Tāk or Tānk, which 'is hidden (concealed) from the history of the Hindus.'[56] Formerly, the Tāks

[55] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, pp.3-4.
[56] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.4.

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and the Khatrīs were related 'as brothers', but the former developed an affinity for wine and were expelled from the caste. In due course, their laws and customs diverged and became distinct. In common with groups such as the Kaṇbīs and Jāts, this is an explanatory narrative of former entitlement followed by involuntary exclusion from the *kṣatriya* status coveted by middle-ranking peasant/pastoralist groups of the period.

Sikandar then lists the ancestors of the sultans before they converted to Islam, a conventional list that leads back to Rāma in an attempt to associate the lineage with divine or *kṣatriya* origin.[57] It is interesting that the seventeenth century *Mir'āt* is the only surviving history of the sultanate, including the court-commissioned Sanskrit eulogy, the *Rājavinoda*, in which an attempt is made to discuss its pre-Muslim origins. The sultans themselves do not seem to have been eager to claim Rajput status or even to acknowledge their earlier history. It is possible that Sikandar's frankness on the convert origins of his subjects is because of his separation in time from them. Although they were conquered by his Mughal patrons, he was obliged to treat them with honour as their chronicler. It is also possible that by the early seventeenth century when he wrote, convert origins no longer needed to be suppressed and prevalent conjecture as to the origins of the sultans could be included in the tale. More interestingly, the acknowledgement of legitimising genealogies that had much in common with those employed by the Rajputs could be an indication of the peculiarly accommodative polity that Gujarat was. There was a genuine attempt at the level of the court ideology to link up with the politics of the Rajput chieftains who were the mainstay of administrative and economic stability in a region like Kathiavad. Indeed, the stabilisation of the Kathiavad frontier through the formulation of stable Rajput polities (now defined through fledgling court societies and primogeniture) was the greatest achievement of the Gujarat sultans, an achievement that distinguished them from previous polities and one that made the Gujarat sultanate more prosperous than its predecessors.

Association of a lineage with Rāma is a trait of groups aspiring to high-status Rajput *sūryavamsa* status but there no evidence in later years that the Tāk community ever achieved it.[58] The cursory reference to Rāma has led modern writers to refer to the Tāks as Rajputs and to the Gujarat sultans as descendants of Rajput converts, even though the reference to Rāmacandra may have been a retrospective attempt in the seventeenth century to assign the sultans a creditable

[57] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.1.
[58] In the nineteenth century, they are generally recorded as being of 'low caste'. W. Crooke, *The tribes and castes of the North-western Provinces and Oudh*, 4 vols. (Calcutta: 1896), vol. I, p. 192, 271, vol II, pp. 224, 254, 264, 370, vol. III, pp.107, 169, Vol. IV, pp. 334, 360-1.

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lineage.[59] However, says Sikandar, 'Whatever and whoever they were, they were a goodly race of men, having pure and virtuous souls, and they performed meritorious actions and gave numberless endowments, and showed good qualities and amiable traits in connection with God's creatures.'[60]

What was important for Fīrūz Shāh was not their ancestry but their ability to provide manpower. The Tāk community were peasants or pastoralists in the late fourteenth century and the brothers Saharan and Sādhu were men of influence in their village who 'could at a call summon thousands of horse and foot'.[61] From the perspective of the Tāks, offering women and military allegiance to the sultans represented a potent means of upward mobility. The transformation of the Tāk peasants to independent sultans within a generation is a prime example of the benefits that manpower-rich groups derived from association with the sultanate. In their turn, the sultans of Gujarat went on to provide the ultimate legitimacy for a range of transforming groups in Gujarat.

As with the Tāk peasants, there were two chief means of becoming associated with the legitimacy derived from the sultanate.[62] The first was to offer military alliance to the sultans. As shown above, Ẓafar Khān's talent was in raising military levies and inducing a range of chieftains to accept his 'legitimacy' and put their manpower in his service. The second way of hitching group or personal advancement to the sultans was to make or claim to have made marriage alliances. This remained important in a transforming pastoralist society heavily based on alliance politics. Concurrently, it also became an important ideological trope to decline marriage alliance with the Muslim sultans, a refusal that also implied a rejection of the prospects of political advancement by those means and a declaration of military confrontation.

In the early period, groups later described as Rajputs included a large number of 'warrior-ascetics' seeking to make advantageous alliances and secure patrons. Alliance was a significant theme in politics and influence was derived less from descent or the control of land than from negotiation and brokerage. As the sultans of Gujarat and their courtiers were able to command more military resources than petty clanships in Gujarat and Malwa, the only way for chieftains to exist was to maintain a situation in which, by negotiation, they were allowed to retain virtual autonomy in return for nominal subject-status and payment of tribute. Conflict was avoided as far

[59] Misra, *Rise*, pp.137-8.
[60] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.4.
[61] Ibid., p.2.
[62] The third means was in the field of religion. As ultimate legitimacy derived from the king, a claim by a proselytiser to have converted the ruler was particularly significant. See Chapter 4 for details.

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as was possible, except for occasional skirmishes and recalcitrance in tribute paying, which was more a manner of asserting autonomy than any design to overthrow the sultanate power.

For chieftains in this period, the existence of the sultanate as patron and paramount employer came to be accepted as part of the order of things.[63] Alliance, marriage and patronage were part of a dialogue of reciprocal reliance between sultanate and chieftains. In the larger picture, brotherhoods were also identified in terms of their ties and allegiance to the paramount local ruler.[64] While kinship and descent were the organizing principle of power within the family, clientship determined access to land and positions of authority outside its ambit. Several clans developed a relationship with the sultans which acknowledged them as overlords and employers.

Between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, several pastoralist bands were able to achieve and pass on to their heirs a measure of landed status, enhanced by agricultural expansion, military opportunities and demographic growth during the sultanate period. This period was characterised by 'the complementarity of asceticism and settled life and by alliance politics as expressed in marriage links.'[65] Marriage had a particular importance in this alliance-based political system. While marriage united a woman with her husband's family, it also created a political alliance.[66] Women did not simply relocate from one clan to another on marriage, they remained members of both clans but with a changed role.[67] The basic loyalties of the chieftain were defined by his 'brotherhood' as well as his relations by marriage. An alliance-seeking warrior, often a dispossessed younger son seeking better prospects abroad, could on occasion contract a marriage at a distance from his natal territory. In these circumstances, the in-laws were vital for him to achieve legitimacy in the region. Legitimation then proceeded through the religious affiliation of the natal clans of the women who often retained their own deities and values. While women were generally expected to adopt the *kul-devī* of the husband's family after marriage, there are several instances in which the *kul-devī* of the woman's natal clan took a place in the husband's family.[68] Later, with the decline in importance of kinship and alliance, there was a tightening of patriliny, loss of importance of the queen's natal lineage, and corresponding loss of political influence of the queen.

Whom did the sultans marry? The first marriage alliance we encounter is in 1431. After Aḥmad Shāh had defeated the Bahmani ruler, he had his son Fatḥ Khān married to the daughter

[63] Kolff, *Naukar*, p.100.
[64] Ziegler, "Rajput Loyalties," p.225.
[65] Kolff, *Naukar*, p.83.
[66] Ziegler, "Rajput Loyalties," p. 225.
[67] Tambs-Lyche, *Kathiawar*, p. 74.
[68] Ibid.

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of the Rai of Mahaim, one Rai Quṭb.[69] In 1442, Muḥammad Shāh married Bībī Mughalī, daughter of the Sammā Jām Jūnā of Sind, another daughter, Bībī Mirkī being wed to the ṣūfī Shāh-i-ʿĀlam.[70] This alliance with the ruler of Sind was an acknowledgment of the close ties between the two regions and proved politically significant subsequently.

In 1446, soon after the birth of his son, Muḥammad marched on Rāi Har of Idar who submitted and offered his daughter in marriage.[71] 'That lady owing to her great beauty kept Muḥammad Shāh bound to her by her personal charm.'[72] She also used her influence with the sultan to get the fort of Idar restored to her father Rāi Har. According to Firishta and Badāʿūni, she was also responsible for poisoning him to death on the instigation of some of his officers.[73] This is the first instance of alliance with the family of a local chieftain but it did not succeed in cementing the latter's loyalty to the sultan.

Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad married the daughter of Shams Khān of Nagaur, thereby cementing the family connection between them. (Shams Khān was the grandson of Shams Khān Dandānī, brother of Ẓafar Khān). However, when Quṭb al-Dīn died, it was again suspected that his wife had poisoned him. The *amīr*s put Shams Khān to death and the sultan's mother (Muḥammad Shāh's wife) handed his daughter over to her slave girls 'who tore her to pieces, and thus killed her with torment.'[74]

While Quṭb al-Dīn was ruling, his stepmother, Bībī Mughalī, took refuge with her sister and brother-in-law, Shāh ʿĀlam, as she was afraid the sultan had designs on her young son's life. The sultan sent his chief wife, Rāṇī Rūp Manjarī, a disciple of Shāh ʿĀlam, to find and fetch the boy, Fatḥ Khān. She saw the boy sitting beside Shāh ʿĀlam and grasped his hand to take him away. Shāh ʿĀlam remarked: 'You take Fateh Khan's hand today, but a day will surely come when he will take yours.'[75] This came to pass after the death of Quṭb al-Dīn when Fatḥ Khān

[69] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.219.
[70] After the death of Muhammad Shāh and then Bibi Mirki, Shāh-i-`Alam married the sultan's widow, Bibi Mughali, the mother of Maḥmūd I. This event is played up by Sikandar, a follower of Shāh `Alam's family, in projecting them as a parallel and equal centre of power to the sultans. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.38.
[71] Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.65.
[72] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.224, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.23.
[73] Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.76.
[74] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.235, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.40.The *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* has eunuchs tearing the woman into pieces, while Firishta says that it was later proved that Shams Khan (and presumably his daughter) were not guilty of having poisoned the sultan. Firishta, *GI, trans.*, p.71.
[75] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.37.

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married his step-brother's widow. Meanwhile, Bībī Mirkī died and Shāh 'Ālam then married her sister, the former queen Bībī Mughalī.[76]

After the unsatisfactory and brief rule of Dā'ūd, Fatḥ Khān, Quṭb al-Dīn's younger brother, was sought to be made sultan. He was the son of Makhdūma-i-Jahān, a senior wife of Muḥammad Shāh otherwise known as Bībī Mughali, the daughter of the Sammā Jām Jūnā of Sind.[77] She was reluctant to consent : 'Please keep your hands off my son; for he has not the strength to bear this heavy burden.'[78] In spite of her misgivings, this boy went on to become Maḥmūd Shāh 'Begaḍā', the most influential ruler of Gujarat. His mother's clan was important to him: he was advised on his campaign to Junagadh by his maternal uncle, Tughluq Khān, who presumably knew the area.[79] In 1472, the sultan marched against a reported insurrection on the borders of Sind, but the rebels scattered when his army came close. Some of his officers averred that this was a good opportunity to take control of the region and appoint a governor there, but the sultan refused: 'as the Makhduma-i-Jahān was descended from the sultans of Sind in the line of chieftainship and royalty, the consideration of the rights of relationship was incumbent upon him; and it appeared very far from kindliness and humanity to seize their territory.'[80]

Maḥmūd had several wives.[81] One of these was Rāṇī Harbāī or Hirabāī, daughter of the Tāh Rāṇā, a Rajput *zamīndār* from the bank of the Mahindri.[82] She was the mother of Khalīl Khān, the future Muẓaffar II, and died soon after giving birth. The child was brought up by Maḥmūd's stepmother, Hans Bāī, a widow of Muḥammad (perhaps the daughter of the Idar king). Another wife was Rāṇī Rūp Manjarī who had formerly been married to his elder brother Quṭb al-Dīn, and came to him after the latter's death. Another was Rāṇī Pīrāī (Sabrāī). After the conquest of Champaner in 1484, the two daughters of the captured Paṭāi Rāval were sent to the harem. Traditions of the Imām Shāhi family near Ahmadabad also relate that one of Imām Shāh's

[76] This is a manifestation of the Bukhārī ṣūfīs' claims of parallel power to the sultanate and to their own semi-royal status. This claim to political significance is made only in the chronicle by their follower, the seventeenth century writer Sikandar.
[77] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.103. Although her son Fatḥ Khan came into power only in 1459, Makhdūma-i-Jahān, the widow of Muḥammad Shāh, is recorded as having a commissioned a mosque to be built in 1454 during the reign of her stepson. See Burgess and Cousens, *Rev. List*, p.292, Chaghatai, *Muslim Monuments of Ahmedabad through their Inscriptions*, XVI, pp.53-54.
[78] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.237.
[79] Ibid., p.256, Misra, ed., *Tarikh-i-Mahmud Shahi*, p.146.
[80] Ahmad, *TA, trans.*, p.259.
[81] He is also credited with strong 'virile powers'. 'The women of his country were too weak for him; and, after cohabitation with several of his wives, he used to derive satisfaction only from a young and strapping Abyssinian lass.' Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.42.
[82] Ibid., p.48.

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daughters was given to Maḥmūd, but there is no confirmation of this alliance and it may be only a legitimising claim made by the Imām Shāhis.

It is significant that in this period the sultans contracted marriages largely with the daughters of local chieftains and with a branch of their own family at Nagaur. One of Maḥmūd's daughters was married to ʿĀdil Khān who was a contender for the control of Asir and Burhanpur. There are no alliances contracted with the contemporary sultans of Malwa, Delhi or the Deccan, nor with Hindu chieftains from further afield. The only extra-territorial marriage alliance we come across in this period was with the daughters of the Jām of Sind. In a landscape in which marriage was a vital means of negotiating status, the restricted circle of alliances must have reflected the Gujarat sultans' social status in the fifteenth century.

Language and literature – Gujarati and Gujarī

Several literary dialects were employed in medieval Gujarat. These included versions of Apabhraṃśa, inflected to suit the religious, ethnic or regional identity of patron and writer. Prominent amongst these was the Jaina version of Apabhraṃśa, elaborated to its greatest extent by intellectuals affiliated to the Caulukyas and Vāghelās in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Long after the demise of the Vāghelās, Jaina Apabhraṃśa continued to be used by community intellectuals. Other Apabhraṃśas shaded into versions of Old Gujarati and Rajasthani, languages which possess a substantial repertoire of poetry, plays and chronicles.[83] Of course, Sanskrit, Jaina Sanskrit, Persian and later, Arabic were also used for literature in Gujarat.

Bardic and heraldic communities such as the Cāraṇas, Bhāṭas, Langhās who were patronised by the emerging pastoralist chieftaincies of Gujarat produced genealogies and other compositions in their own literary-performative dialects – Ḍingala amongst others. One example of a bardic text is the *Raṇamalla Chanda* by the poet Śrīdhara, written in the late fourteenth century. This text uses a number of Persian-derived words which must have entered the vocabulary by this time.[84] Later historical ballads in Gujarati such as the *Kānhaḍade Prabandha* (1456) also used a range of vocabulary derived from Persian and Arabic. These genres of poetry were distinguished from other kinds of compositions partly by a distinct vocabulary but also by specific prosodic, declamatory and musical forms.[85] The antiquity of these dialects as they have been recorded in recent times is difficult to determine. This is partly because of the paucity of

[83] Vaudeville, *Myths, Saints and Legends in Medieval India*, pp.274-5.
[84] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.312.
[85] Balvant Jani, *Svadhyaya ane Sanshodhan* (Gandhinagar: Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 2000), p.40, Gordon Ross Thompson, "Music and Values in Gujarati-speaking Western India" (University of California, Los Angeles, 1987), p.113.

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manuscript material from before the eighteenth century, as bardic groups tend to copy (and often telescope) worn-out manuscripts and discard older ones. These dialects were also trans-regional, being comprehensible to knowledgeable audiences all over Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa.[86]

The earliest Gujarati works, as opposed to those in Jaina Apabhraṃśa, are usually dated to the fourteenth century.[87] A prominent example of a transforming linguistic style is found in the Apabhraṃśa poem *Sandeśarāsaka*, written probably in the fourteenth century by a Muslim writer Abdala Rahamāna ('Abd al-Raḥmān).[88] This is a love-poem, combining the message-poem and *rāsa* genres which anticipates a later vogue for Kṛṣṇaite Vaiṣṇava-inflected love poetry in fifteenth century Gujarat.[89] These include love-poetry, linguistic texts and historical ballads. A popular genre of poetry was the *rāsa*, erotic songs that often accompanied mother-goddess worship or other religious festivities. Such song lyrics were often set to music and accompanied by dancing. Also popular were the *bārahmāsā* poems that had narrative descriptions of the seasons. The *rāsa*s celebrating the spring were known as *phāgu*s, which became a popular genre, including important compositions such as the *Sthūlibhadraphāga* (1324) and the *Vasanta-vilasa* (early fifteenth century). Many *rāsa*, *phāgu* and *bārahmāsā* poems dealt with the heroine's *viraha* (separation from the beloved), a motif that was later elaborated by Vaiṣṇava poets. Moreover, the explicit connections made between Neminātha (the Jaina *tīrthankara* about whom many erotic peoms were written) and Kṛṣṇa allowed for motifs to flow between traditions. The rise in popularity of these compositions is related to the revival of interest in Kṛṣṇa worship in Gujarat and many of the compositions are inflected by a Kṛṣṇaite Vaiṣṇava theme. A *phāgu* by Natarśī (c.1439) expresses this:

> The sylvan goddess came and besought the Lord. "The ten quarters have assumed new forms; Kāmadeva is coming to embrace you, Kṛshṇa, Lord Murāri, pray come."
>
> Having heard this, the Lord was pleased and looked at his friends; and with his friends, the Yādava went to the forest.[90]

[86] Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.309.
[87] K.M. Munshi locates the earliest Gujarati works in the late twelfth century. However, many of the recognisable features of modern Gujarati only entered texts from about 1400. Munshi, *Literature*, pp.85-6.
[88] Abdul Rahman, *The Saṃdeśarāsaka of Abdul Rahman*, trans. C. M. Mayrhofer (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), p.xii.
[89] Ibid., p.xi. The editor remarks: 'This genre is associated, in ways that deserve further exploration, with the worship of Kṛṣṇa as the god who offers humankind his grace in return for its devotion.' See also Mansukhlal Jhaveri, *History of Gujarati Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1978), p.12.
[90] Munshi, *Literature*, p.91.

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It is not often appreciated just what a melting pot Gujarat was under the sultans in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Merchants and migrants had settled in Gujarat for centuries. When the Delhi sultanate achieved control of the trade route from north India to the sea, fortune-seekers poured into Gujarat. The governorship of the region was the most prized position in the administration, often virtually auctioned by the sultans, but there were good pickings to be had for almost everyone who tried his hand at trade, war or preaching. It has been surmised that a lingua franca was evolved by this diverse and polyglot population: a language, basically north Indian in structure, that had been developing in the region for the past couple of centuries to facilitate commercial and social transactions.[91] However, this language did not yet have a literature.

After Timur's invasion of Delhi in 1398-99, the Delhi sultanate sank into deep crisis and the balance of power began gradually to shift towards the south – to the new sultanates of Malwa, Jaunpur, Gujarat and the Deccan. More fortune-seekers came to Gujarat, including the fugitive Delhi sultan himself, as the last governor of Tughluqid Gujarat struck out on his own in the first decade of the fifteenth century. Over the next half-century, the new sultans of Gujarat succeeded in regulating the trade and politics of the region, reining in freebooters, suppressing rebellion and ensuring a relatively secure environment for trade. Theirs was a deeply eclectic court and had fewer elite tendencies than, say, the contemporary Dakkhanī courts, which espoused a largely Persianate culture. The necessity for the state to enforce a pragmatic, trade-promoting consensus permitted a variety of religious and cultic formations to flourish. None of this was hindered by the prosperity of the region and the ready availability of patrons, around the court and elsewhere.

By the first decades of the fifteenth century, there had been little development in the field of Hindavi poetry. While texts were produced in other north Indian vernaculars or transregional languages, Indo-Muslim literature continued to be in Persian. It is significant then that the first effusion of Indo-Muslim vernacular composition took place not in north India but in Gujarat, with the poetry of the Ahmadabad-born ṣūfī, Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Bājan. Along with Persian verses, he wrote Hindi poems in a verse form called *jikrī* (based on the Arabic *ẓikr*, remembering) which became popular with later Gujarat ṣūfīs.[92] Significantly, Shaykh Bājan mentioned that his *jikrī* verses (presumably unlike his Persian ones) were sung and set to music, a useful reminder that much of vernacular poetry at the time was performed or sung in public.

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[91] Misra, *Qissa-i-Ghamghin*, quoted in Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.111-112.
[92] Desai, *Malfuz Literature: As a source of Political, Social, and Cultural History of Gujarat and Rajasthan*.

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> Poems that have been composed by this *faqir* are called *jikri* in the Hindvi tongue, and the singers of Hind play and sing them upon instruments, observing the discipline of the ragas.[93]

However, Gujarī was in practice not distinguished from Hindavi as a separate language. Indeed, many saints and poets composed in both Gujarī and Hindavi. In a poem like *Rāval Deval* attributed to Shaykh Bājan there is little language-wise to distinguish as a composition in Gujarī:

We do not go to the king's palace (*rāval)* or temple (*deval*)
We wear rags and eat dry bread
The practice of us, the dervishes, is this,
We search for water and mosque,
In the pleasant cool shade we sit
And eat whatever others give us.[94]

Gujarati words such as *rāval* and *deval* create a referential atmosphere to the immediate Gujarati landscape against which such a poem would have been recited. Moreover, the poem's metre and other musical specificities might made it recognisable as a Gujarī composition.

Gujarat was becoming a magnet for ṣūfīs and other Muslim preachers from north India and Sind. By the mid-fifteenth century, more poets like Qāẓī Maḥmūd Daryā'ī (1415-1534) and Shaykh ʿAlī Jīv Gāmdhanī (d. 1565) were beginning to write in the vernacular popularised by Shaykh Bājan, only now it was generally called Gujarī. Other prominent ṣūfīs such as Shaykh Aḥmad Khattū (d.1446) and Shāh ʿĀlam Bukhārī (d.1531) – both closely associated with the Gujarat sultans – also used Gujarī to preach in, utterances and compositions that were later anthologised by their followers.[95] In 1434, Faẓl al-Dīn Balkhī of Kadi in North Gujarat composed a lexicon, *Baḥr al-Fazā'il* (The Ocean of Virtues), which included a section on the Hindavi words used in contemporary poetry.[96] The fifth sultan of Gujarat, Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad is also believed to have composed poetry in Gujarī.[97] But even earlier, Ismāʿīlī preachers such as the shadowy Pīr Shams and Satgur Nūr, generally dated between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, used the language for their compositions.[98]

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[93] Cited in Faruqi, *Early Urdu*, p.72.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Desai, *Malfuz Literature: As a source of Political, Social, and Cultural History of Gujarat and Rajasthan*, p.43.
[96] Dar, "Gujarat's Contribution to Gujari and Urdu," p.22.
[97] Desai, *Malfuz Literature: As a source of Political, Social, and Cultural History of Gujarat and Rajasthan*, p.45.
[98] The Ismāʿīlī preachers represent the link between the Indo-Muslim vernacular world of the sultanate courts and the balladic tradition of the martial pastoralist groups of western India: they participated in and helped to constitute both worlds. See Khan, *Ramdev Pir*.

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The first mention of the term Gujarī was probably in Amīr Khusrau's list of the languages of India in *Nūh Sipihr*.[99] However, the term appears as the description of a particular text only in the fifteenth century, under the sultans of Gujarat. Although its practitioners continued at times to call the language they used Hindi or Hindavi, now it was usually called Gujarī, the version of the general north Indian lingua franca that pertained to and had distinguishing characteristics specific to Gujarat but was distinct from Gujarati. There are several explanations of the origin and function of this name. One is that it was a remnant of the tongue of the Gujar pastoralists who began to settle all over the plains of northern and western India from the first centuries CE.[100] This would explain why it has features similar to Panjabi and Sindhi. Another etymology suggests that Gujarī was the tongue employed for haggling and bartering at periodic markets, *guẓargāh*, the like of which were – and are – common in Gujarat and Rajasthan. These markets were colloquially called *gujarī* or *gūjarī*.[101] Gujarī bears, like Hindavi and Gujarati, traces of the language of pastoralist north-western India that also appear in ballads and bardic narratives. It was equally a market-place patois evolved in a region where merchants from many countries transacted business. Nevertheless, its *literary* form, as opposed to its spoken one, should be associated with the Indo-Muslim culture presided over by the sultans of Gujarat from the fifteenth century.

There has been little notice taken of the sultanate contributions towards vernacularisation in recent analyses of that phenomenon. In Gujarī, we have an instance of vernacularisation proceeding through an Indo-Muslim literary dialect, a representation of an Indo-Muslim *spoken* dialect. How then did an immigrant patois become a literary dialect? And further, why did this transition take place within the wider circles of the Gujarat sultanate to the extent that, by the sixteenth century, Gujarī was widely used as a literary and spoken Indo-Muslim dialect, helping link the Gujarat court with the other Indo-Muslim courts of north India and the Deccan?

The rise of Gujarī was a function of the complexity of the religious market in sultanate Gujarat in which preachers and missionaries competed for converts and resources. Gujarat was a place where, in order to be influential, preachers needed to communicate with a diverse population in an idiom which would be familiar to them. Associated with an evolving court, itself presiding over an emerging political and economic consensus of considerable prosperity and inventiveness, Gujarī was a lingua franca, a language for a region of migrants to communicate

[99] Dar, "Gujarat's Contribution to Gujari and Urdu," p.19.
[100] Faruqi, *Early Urdu*, p.65.
[101] Ambashankar Nagar and Alabakhsh Shaikh, eds., *Gujarat ki Hindustani Kavyadhara* (Ahmedabad: Gujarat Vidyapith, 1991), p.18. (translation mine)

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with each other. Pir Mashā'ikh, a Gujarī poet as well as an Ismā'īlī preacher, expressed it succintly in the seventeenth century:

The yokels who live in the wilderness
Will not understand without Gujarī
I must make books thus
I must take on their speech so that they understand.[102]

While Gujarī may have been the only way to communicate with yokels for a seventeenth-century writer, earlier it was also associated with a certain local feeling. Khūb Muḥammad Chishtī (1539-1614) wrote:

Like the speech
Flowing from my mouth:
Arabia and Iran join in it
To become one

The speech that flows
From the heart,
The speech of Arabia and Iran:
Listen, listen to the speech
Of Gujarat.[103]

This verse sums up some of the context for the evolution of Gujarī: it was the speech of Gujarat tinged by the speech of Arabia and Iran.

This dialect of the bazaar, the ṣūfī's hospice and the army was soon elevated by its association with the court into a literary language. This process of 'elevation' was part of the larger reinvention of cultural institutions – in literature, theatre and music – carried out at the Gujarat court.[104] The court cast around for available cultural forms and then made them official by patronising them. Gujarī became emblematic of the linguistic public culture of the Gujarat sultanate, but remained whimsical and flexible and was not subjected to classicising impulses. Thus Gujarī was granted a certain legitimacy when Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad, the fifth sultan, composed a *divān* in Gujarī as well as when court-affiliated ṣūfīs adopted the language for their discourses.

A metaphor for the cultural process operating here may be found in the story of the gardener Halu related in the *Mir'āt-i-Sikandarī*. Sultan Maḥmūd had commissioned a man from

[102] Ibid., p.46.
[103] Faruqi, *Early Urdu*, p.97.
[104] Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye, "Indo-Persian Texts on Music Patronage in the Sultanate of Gujarat," in *Confluence of Cultures: French Contributions to Indo-Persian Studies*, ed. M. Alam, Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye, and M. Gaborieu (New Delhi: 1994), p.115.

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Khurasan to lay out an artful garden in his new town of Champaner. The Khurasani built a beautiful garden and adorned it with fountains and waterfalls, features previously unknown in Gujarat. The delighted sultan rewarded him lavishly. Soon a Gujarati carpenter named Halu came forward and claimed that he could do an even better job. In due course, he built an even more beautiful and ingenious garden. On being questioned how he had learnt these skills, he replied: 'I disguised myself as an ignorant labourer and worked for the man from Khurasan, and partly by watching what he did and partly by my own skill, I acquired the knowledge.' The author of the chronicle, the seventeenth century writer Sikandar, sums up what was happening:

> Most of the elegant arts and crafts that are now common in Gujarat were copied from men of skill and genius from other countries, and Gujarat like an accomplished person became a collection of merits gathered from different sources. It was in the time of this great Sultan (Maḥmūd) that the people of Gujarat learned arts and wit, – else before his time they were very simple homely folks indeed.[105]

Such literary and performative dialects were evidently intelligible to their audiences. However, their use was largely restricted to professional groups or trained writers. 'Gujarati' literature, in the sense of written versions of a widely *spoken* tongue, may be traced, arguably, no earlier than the fifteenth century and the emergence, for the first time, of compositions whose provenance had little or nothing to do with the state.[106] These were compositions emerging from religious orders patronised by merchant and occupational groups and an increasingly prosperous peasantry. Chief among these orders were forms of Vaiṣṇavism and Satpanthi Ismā'īlism. While it is not clear whether these compositions were written or textualised in their earliest phase in the fifteenth century, their redactions even a century later, as with the compositions of Narsiṃha Mahetā, make it clear that this was a different order of texts.[107] For the first time, religious and sectarian compositions were emerging from the *laity*, not from a literati or professional group such as brahmanas or bards specially trained in the production of religious literature and the use of a suitable language. This trend soon became widespread, with vernacular compositions emerging – and eventually becoming textualised – from previously excluded groups such as women and occupational and lower castes.[108] Correspondingly, the performance – recitation,

[105] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.61.
[106] The first 'Gujarāti' prose composition was *Pratikramana-bālāvabodha*, earliest prose work in Gujarâti by Tarunaprabha Sūrī in 1355. Majmudar, *Cultural History*, p.109.
[107] See Mallison on the early textual versions of Narasiṃha Mahetā's compositions and the problems of dating them. Mallison, *Prabhatiyam*, pp.24-26.
[108] Some of the groups who employed these compositions as religious literature became secretive about their affiliations, rites and membership and eventually may also have developed a dedicated cultic and partially secret mystic vocabulary accessible only to the initiated. Khan, *Ramdev Pir*, pp.49, 78, 91,

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dramatisation or singing – of such compositions also tended to be carried out by the laity itself in exclusive gatherings, *satsang*s or *jamā'at*s, rather than viewing professional performers, priests or bards.

Gujarī, similarly, could potentially be used by a lay population. It did not require particular training and was never part of a curriculum. While it was employed by some sultans and courtiers, it was chiefly the language of ṣūfīs. Muslim mystics of various kinds, including Ismā'īlī ones, used Gujarī for their compositions not as literary conceits but out of the necessity of communicating with their followers. Gujarī never developed tendencies towards classicisation or standardisation, as Urdu eventually did. This may have been because of its location within a particularly practice-oriented society, where refined vernacular language training was not part of a grooming repertoire for the sons of the courtiers or merchants. It remained the idiom of ṣūfīs and Muslim mystics, providing them with a language to communicate with their followers and potential converts, and while the Gujarat sultanate existed, with the court.

While literature in Gujarī was an important manifestation of sultanate culture, the sultans also patronised Arabic learning and literature, perhaps more than other contemporary courts. The Gujarat sultans, especially Maḥmūd, became important patrons of Arabic learning and gave ṣūfīs and scholars court patronage and grants of land. Like Akbar a century later, Maḥmūd was an illiterate savant who taught himself through association with scholars. Islamic scholars associated with the court included Maulānā Mu'īn al-Dīn Kazarūnī and Tāj al-Dīn Suyūṭī in Patan.[109] Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān known as Ibn Suwayd, a pupil of Al-Sakhāwī, was granted the title *Malik al-Muḥaddithīn* (king of traditionists) along with a stipend.[110] The translation of famous Arabic works into Persian was promoted at the court. Ibn-i-Afrāsh translated the famous *Shifā* of Qāẓī Ayāz into Persian and remarked on the sultan's legal acuity.[111] An abridged translation into Persian of Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary was also produced by Yūsuf b. Aḥmad in 1487.[112]

Niranjan Rajyaguru, *Bijmargi gupt pat-upasana ane mahapanthi santoni bhajanvani* (Gandhinagar: Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 1995), pp.3-4.

[109] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.150.

[110] M.A. Quraishi, *Muslim Education and Learning in Gujarat (1297-1758)* (Baroda: Faculty of Education and Psychology, MS University, 1972), p.30.

[111] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, pp.109-10.

[112] Hajji Abd allah al-Dabir, *Zafar ul-Walih bi Muzaffar wa Alihi: An Arabic History of Gujarat*, trans. M.F. Lokhandwala, 2 vols., vol. I (1970), vol. II (1974), Gaekwad's Oriental Series, nos. 152, 157 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1970-74), p.288.

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The sultanate : structure and legitimacy

The court was where the sultan was and it travelled with him on his military expeditions and from capital to new capital. By the mid-fifteenth century, a administrative structure of governance, military control and fiscal regulation was beginning to emerge but there is little evidence of the elaborate bureaucratisation seen in sultanfates that presided over a predominantly agrarian order.[113] There is little evidence of elaborate courtly ritual in the fifteenth century. The accession of each sultan was marked by lavish gift-giving but this was not accompanied by court ceremonial of the kind witnessed by Baṭṭūṭa at the Tughluqid court.[114] Nor do we encounter elaborate receptions for foreign ambassadors in the sources. This was a trading sultanate ruling a civic world.

Over the course of the fifteenth century, power came to be seen as deriving from the sultan and his immediate family. This was contested at first, as when Muẓaffar Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh were opposed by factions for the control of the whole of Gujarat, but by the mid-fifteenth century, there was no real opposition to the existence of the dynasty. Nevertheless, the sultan's person was not sacralised. In the chronicles, the sultans emerge as accessible to courtiers, employees, ṣūfīs and even common people.[115] The first figure who emerges from the chronicles as larger-than-life is Maḥmūd Begaḍā but even he is a benevolent, folkloric figure from the point of view of later chroniclers. One anecdote relates that a peasant soldier returned from his village with a gift of the freshest grasses for Maḥmūd's favourite horse.

> The Sultan smiled his thanks, encouraged whereby the unsophisticated countryman proceeded to give an account of a *koli* woman in his village, who, he said, used to bear a son every year. This year, said he, her husband was dead, and if the Sultan was so inclined, she was worth translation to the royal harem to multiply heirs for the throne. The Sultan laughed, and the more he did so, the more the yokel began to assert the truth of the story swearing that the woman had given birth to seven sons in seven years.[116]

Maḥmūd was an illiterate savant with a deep interest in religion, described by the chroniclers in a style that anticipates another unlettered monarch, Akbar. 'Though illiterate, the Sultan's mind from his constant association with learned men was stored with such a rich stock of useful knowledge, colloquial and historical (both sacred and profane), legal, poetical and

[113] Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, Chapter 3.
[114] Battuta, *Rehla*, p.91.
[115] Of the texts contemporary to Maḥmūd, only the *Rājavinoda,* a Sanskrit eulogy in his honour, ritually praises him in a traditional idiom.
[116] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.70, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, p.140.

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biographical that, except scholars, nobody in speaking with him could say that he was unlettered.'[117]

Elsewhere, he is a pious paternal figure : 'The existence of the Sultan was, one would say, for the happiness of his people. There was not a man who had the load of an injustice or injury on his heart, and everyone was blessed with happiness and liberty'.[118] After a gruelling set of campaigns in which he lost many soldiers his attendants found him deeply distressed. When asked the reason for his grief, he explained: 'I should indeed be a thoughtless and unworthy man if after arriving here in safety and comfort I do not enquire after and make provision to assuage the grief of the widows and families of those who have for ever marched away from this transitory world. It matters little if we delay for two or three days to enter the city, but to enter it without enquiring after and comforting and cooling the ardour of the grief of those whose dear ones have not returned, would be far from considerate or humane.'[119]

In the course of the fifteenth century, the sultanate was generally accepted as the paramount power. Texts and inscriptions throughout the region mention that they were composed during the reign of one of the sultans or their local subordinates. This was the case even of texts composed in a Jaina or Sanskritic idiom. In 1413, an early Vaiṣṇava text from Talaja mentions that it was composed when Malik Śrī Usmān, the local sultanate official and Raol Śrī Sārangajī, the chieftain, were in power in Ghogha.[120] A heavily illuminated copy of the Old Gujarati poem *Vasanta Vilāsa* was composed in the reign of Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh. The poet Gangādhara, who arrived at the court of Champaner from Vijayanagara claimed as his highest achievement to have vanquished the poets of the Ahmadabad court.[121] Thus ultimate local legitimacy was derived from the court of the sultan.

Maḥmūd Begaḍā's reign carried this tendency even further, so that legitimacy was now vested not merely in the dynasty but in the person of the greatest sultan. His emergence as the prototypical benevolent monarch of folklore is related firstly to the length of his reign of over half a century. Secondly, it has to do with his reign being viewed as proverbially prosperous, a veritable golden age, by contemporaries as well as subsequent chroniclers. Maḥmūd was the first ruler after the twelfth century Caulukya ruler Siddharāja Jayasiṃha to be viewed as the fount of legitimacy and justice in this fashion. Over his long reign, he was seen as having delivered peace

[117] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.49.
[118] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*, pp.140-141.
[119] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.64, Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS*.
[120] Peterson, *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, p.87.
[121] Gangādhara, *Gangadāsa-pratāpavilāsa-nātakam*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No.156 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1973), p.vii.

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and prosperity to his people. Having achieved that, he became the righteous king who would stand up for the common man against the machinations of bureaucracy and orthodoxy. 'Now followed a period of such peace and prosperity that no eye had seen nor ear heard; the soldier was independent and in comort, the dervish careless of all but the worship of the Almighty, the merchant happy in his trade and profit, and the whole country full of peace and tranquillity, and free from anxiety and danger.'[122]

The segmentary lineage state posits a quasi-autonomous centre whose administrative structure is repeated at the periphery at every segment of lineage power. Thus the centre has limited territorial sovereignty, power diminishes towards the periphery and does not possess a monopoly on force. The structure is held together by ritual sovereignty. However, the Gujarat sultans were the sole sovereign force in Gujarat and there was no ritual sovereignty holding the centre to the periphery. As Maḥmūd Begada's career shows, the state was maintained by force and through the setting up of a complex bureaucratic hierarchy fuelled by a dynamic trade economy. B.D. Chattopadhaya has shown that even the Rajput polities in this period were not held together by ritual sovereignty.[123] The sultans, of course, were a far more forceful centralising power than the Caulukyas. Their principal achievement lay in curbing the powers of their courtiers and the fissiparous potential of clan politics amongst the pastoralist bands. Once the pastoralist bands had been reduced to subsidiary positions under a Muslim sultan, they were denied access to the central ruling lineage which meant that they could not play the intimate marriage- and alliance-based politics of the clan. Their only chance would have been the overthrow of the sultans through force and this was ruled out as the sultans had a much greater hold over military resources and personnel.

This form of politics was based on the centralisation of imperial power around the charismatic figure of the sultan and his court, backed by a strong army that owed allegiance to the sultan rather than to feudatories. The sultanate was gained through military conquest and was maintained through military power. The sultanate's ideology was not in the main about clan politics, re-distribution of resources or religious patronage in the manner of the Hindu polities of the preceding period. The sultan was the fount of political sovereignty, not the clan. Further, in principle, the clergy was not essential to the ideology of the state. Also, it needs to be emphasised that the Gujarat sultanate, like other pre-Mughal Islamic states, was based on a constant readiness for war.[124] The sultan's dominant persona was that of a military general rather than a ruler in

[122] Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, p.45.
[123] Chattopadhyaya, "Origin," p.133.
[124] Digby, *War Horse*, p.41.

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charge of maintaining social and political order. In addition, military garrisons from the central army were placed in strategic locations to balance the forces of courtiers and clans. Finally, the military nobility was part of a centralised impersonal military bureaucracy, not of a set of interlinked clan polities. The sultan's power was unchallenged and stood above everyone. Indeed, the history of Rajput polities after the onset of Muslim rule is marked by a running tension between the centrifugal potential of clan politics and the attempt to emulate Islamic kingship through the centralisation of power.

The Gujarat state depended on loose alliances through which it would control but not destroy the mobile identities of its participants. Mobile groups such as pastoralist chieftains and mercenary warriors were sought to be drawn into the sultanate and pacified. It was rare for a repository of manpower or resources to be alienated completely from his base, thus after a chieftain was defeated, he or his descendants were handed back a portion of their lands.[125] Merchants continued to be patronised, as did carrier communities. However, central rule did not mean that the centre took over all power. This was still a rudimentary court and depended on the loyalty of subordinates and courtiers. But the sultans did ensure that the military power of the chieftains was curbed, be it Muslim or Hindu. They absorbed many of the mercenary armies into the sultanate forces and allowed the chieftains to set up stable principalities that were fuelled by the returns from trade and cultivation of land. This put an end to the cycles of loot and plunder that inevitably followed the entry of pastoralist groups into the region and their subsequent political and economic manouevres. The generous salaries and perquisites offered by the sultans to the soldiers in the army made it possible for the system to function more or less smoothly. And this again was made possible as long as the state coffers were stable enough, well oiled by the rich Gujarat trade.

The sultans were now seen as the primary guarantors of prosperity and security in the region. This also enabled migrant groups to evolve long-lasting networks of trade and kinship. Many more were now settling in Gujarat and prosperity was now perceived to permeate to all levels of society through new prospects for employment and trade. The prosperity and expansion of the social order led to the expansion of existing institutions and the development of new ones as the increasingly complex system became self-sustaining. As people struck deep roots and became committed to their long-term prospects in the region, their kin and professional ties widened and economics and language began to intersect. Peripheral regions were drawn into the widening networks of communication and trade. The new literary languages such as Gujarati and

[125] Examples include the Paṭāī Rāval of Champaner, the Jhālās and the Vaghelās. Sikandar b. Muhammad, *MS, trans.*, pp.41, 47, 60.

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Gujarī represented the codification of the laity's language into written form and texts in these languages now circulated for education and edification. This was a region self-consciously thinking about itself as a region.

As the sultanate changed from a randomly tribute-exacting agency to a sustained administrative order, returns were felt all the way down the infrastructure. Apart from the overt protection and patronage to the Sunni orthodoxy and the ṣūfī orders, there was little state discrimination between other groups. They were put down only when they became a political threat. Thus, the Ismā'īlī pir Imām Shāh was allowed to proselytise right next to the capital as long as he did not become a political threat. However, the Sūmrās on the Kacch border represented a political challenge and had to be put down. Similarly, Vaiṣṇava merchants did not represent a political threat and could be allowed to build stepwells. Temples were another matter as they had a reputation of becoming a centre for disaffection and political challenge. By the mid-fifteenth century, the intense competition for religious converts was beginning to ease off as newly prosperous groups formed sustainable kin and professional networks. The variegated religious marketplace within which proselytisers vied for converts began to give way to a scenario in which cultural concordances could take place and groups could make a variety of religious choices, often opting for 'syncretic' practices or new congregational forms of personal worship such as *bhakti* or Satpanthi Ismā'īlism.

Conclusion

Gujarat had been a consistently urbanised and prosperous region since early historic times. As it was always on a cultural frontier, there was scope for migrants to reinvent their identities and stay mobile. For states starting up in this region, the challenge was always to maintain the dynamism of trade and derive maximum benefit from it while maintaining order and security. The Gujarat sultanate was the first state in the region to make the transition from a tribute-exacting economy to a structured semi-bureaucratic system with relatively fixed and predictable returns accruing from land revenue and trade. Over the fifteenth century, an administrative infrastructure was extended all over the region in an attempt to systematise governance and facilitate trade.

By Maḥmūd Begaḍā's time, the sultanate represented the overarching order within which people functioned. The region and the sultanate were now conjoined linguistically and discursively. It was now commonsensical to acknowledge the linking of sultanate, region and language as representing similar values. The greatest achievement of the sultanate was therefore two-fold. Firstly it settled the frontiers of Gujarat, a constant source of political and economic

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instability for dynasties that had ruled earlier. Most dynasties fell as a result of their inability to absorb pastoralist groups making inroads into the region, most notably from the west. Even if they managed to convert pastoralist groups to vassaldom, they were unable to curb their military autonomy. This the sultans did. The results of the sultans' achievements in the fifteenth century can be measured by the fact that by the sixteenth century, *garasiya* and Rajput groups had set up imitative courts and households within sultanate territories. They were even able to generate sub-clans in the regular manner of Rajput segmentation without challenging the ultimate power of the sultans.

Secondly, it managed to regularise trade in a complex society that was that was rapidly becoming sedentarised and urbanised. This process now included all parts of the region that we now recognise as Gujarat, unlike earlier polities that had consisted of a settled core and wide unsettled hinterland. This was the first polity that depended on an understanding of the intermeshing of pastoralist clan politics, trade and sectarian religion. It was recognised that the prosperity generated through trade would help pacify pastoralist groups and curb the militancy of sectarian religiosity. The slow, fixed and uneven returns from a predominantly agrarian economy would not have served the purpose. Only a well-managed and constantly expanding trading empire could meet the challenge of the results of prosperity itself – expanding populations, increasing stratification in society and newer upwardly mobile social groups with economic and political aspirations. It was to facilitate this that Maḥmūd Begaḍā constantly toured his territories, marrying the women of pastoralist chieftains, subduing pirates and intransigient pastoralist groups and imposing the peace of the region. He was busy ensuring the symbolic presence of the sultan across the region in ways that would convince one and all of the benefits of belonging to the Gujarat sultanate.

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Conclusion

By the death of Maḥmūd Begaḍā in 1511, Gujarat had been transformed. As a result of the ceaseless campaigns of the fifteenth century, the whole of the region was militarily controlled and was relatively peaceful. A number of administrative measures had also ensured that most of the countryside was now settled, tilled and connected to trade routes. The manufacturing towns and ports had continued to increase in size and prosperity.

Gujarat was now a cohesive entity. The land of the sultans was fabulously prosperous, militarily strong and culturally diverse. Immigrants still came to Gujarat to trade and proselytise. Although Cambay was on the decline, the Gujarat ports were still vital players in the Indian Ocean trade and the Portuguese were anxious to find a foothold along the coast. The wealthy courtiers, merchants and occupational groups now needed greater legitimacy and were happy to patronise priests, bards and poets who came seeking their fortunes. Preachers and reformers also found an audience here: these included the Vaiṣṇava consolidator Vallabhācārya, the self-proclaimed Mahdi from Jaunpur and a host of *bhakti* saint and hero figures.

Thanks to the military strength and administrative infrastructure built up by the early sultans, the descendants of Maḥmūd could now get on with being sultans – developing a court culture, enjoying courtly music and festivities and patronising poets and scholars. While the early sultans emerge from the sources as earthy, somewhat folkloric figures, the later ones – Muzaffar II and Bahādur in particular – were more remote, elite and courtly.

From the fourteenth century, there had been tremendous prestige to be derived from association with the trade of Gujarat. According to the eighteenth-century author of the *Mir'āt-i-Aḥmadī*, Sikandar Lodī declared that while the wealth of the sultan of Delhi rested on grain and pulses, the wealth of the sultan of Gujarat rested on coral and pearls.[1] While the sultans were certainly enriched by the revenues of trade, they also needed it to ensure their supplies of horses and military equipment. Trade oiled the wheels of the infrastructure of settlement and administration that they were putting down throughout the region: every new settlement had traders and was close to trade routes. Most significant, however, was their status as lords of the sea and of the riches of the great port towns. This was soon to be battered by encounters with the

[1] Khan, *MA Supplement, trans.*, p.160.

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Portuguese, leading to the death of Bahādur Shāh at their hands, but in 1511, fresh from a naval victory over the Portuguese, the sultans were still paramount.

The regional identity of Gujarat was now firmly yoked to a linguistic one. In the fifteenth century, Gujarati had begun to emerge as a language of compositions, especially ballads in a heroic or narrative mode and *bhakti* compositions, although archaic literary dialects such as Apabhramśa were still used. In the course of the sixteenth century, many more compositions in Gujarati would emerge as merchants and occupational groups sponsored the writing of a range of religious and performative compositions in the spoken tongue. Meanwhile Gujarī was widely used as a literary and spoken Indo-Muslim dialect, serving to connect the court of the Gujarat sultans in mutual intelligibility with the other Indo-Muslim courts of north India and the Deccan.

In the fifteenth century, it had been in the sultans' interest not to transform the religious, cultic and community identities of trading and occupational groups. Most groups in the region were recent migrants, many still itinerant. They were linked by evolving networks of kinship, religious and economic ties that facilitated trade and exchange. The sultans did not intervene radically in these arrangements so as not to disrupt a system that ran well enough without their intervention.

While sultanate chronicles document every instance of iconoclasm and temple desecration on the moving military frontier, they usually add that desecration was a means of destroying the ideological legitimacy of the local ruler. Hindu kingship in this period was still linked to the temples that the local chief patronised or protected. Thus, rebellion against a sultanate governor usually took the form of building or renovating a royal temple. Correspondingly, when the sultanate 'crushed' rebellion, this included the destruction or desecration of the temple that had proved an ideological rallying point.

The fact that this link between chieftain and temple was fully recognised by the sultans is borne out also by the fact that no Jaina temple – invariably endowed and protected by merchants – was ever targetted for destruction, apart from the single instance of the desecration of Shatrunjaya in 1330, which was speedily made good by Alp Khān.[2] In the course of the fifteenth century, several stepwells were built and endowed, some dedicated specifically to Hindu deities. By the early sixteenth century, the first temples of merchant-sponsored neo-Vaiṣṇavism such as those at Dvaraka and Dakor were being built.

[2] Misra, *Rise*, p.45.

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While Muslim scholars and proselytisers of various stripes came to Gujarat in this period, it is significant that non-Islamic religious and literary activity also flourished and expanded under the sultanate. Jaina religious texts continued to be produced and embellished with patronage from merchants and lay people. Pilgrimage to Jaina and Vaiṣṇava shrines became popular. An aniconic Jaina 'reform' sect, the Lonka gaccha, began in the sultanate capital of Ahmadabad in the mid-fifteenth century. The *Kāṇhaḍade Prabandha*, the verse narrative of the encounter between the armies of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī and a Cauhāṇ chieftain Kāṇhaḍade was written in sultanate territories in north Gujarat. The neo-Vaiṣṇava poet Narsiṃha Mahetā is believed to have lived in Cuḍāsamā- and then sultanate-ruled Junagadh in the mid-fifteenth century. In his compositions, the chief opponent to his message was not the Muslim sultan but the local Śaivite ruler Māṇḍalik.

In the sixteenth century, religious groupings began to take a more institutional form as merchants and chieftains looked to bards, genealogists and priests for legitimation of their status and identity. Pastoralist chieftains, whether in the employ of the sultans or in tributary arrangements with them, attempted to align themselves to Rajput status hierarchies by commissioning elaborate genealogies and adopting 'courtly' practices. In this land of immigrants, all groups could potentially reinvent or adjust their identities depending upon their success in manipulating wealth, political influence and genealogical discourses. By the sixteenth century, these manipulations were bearing fruit as religious sects and political groups began to project exclusive identities which included, in terms of material remains, 'typical' compositions and identifiable architecture.

While identities and political formations began to emerge more clearly in the sixteenth century, many of the institutions and processes that marked the frontier history of Gujarat continued to operate well into the nineteenth century. This included the tendency for small Rajput states to establish themselves through a combination of segmentation, upward mobility through the manipulation of descent hierarchies and the legitimising overlordship of the sultanate and then the Mughal state. A tension between itinerancy and settlement ran right through the subsequent history of the region, coming into sharp focus when the Marathas started taking an increased interest in Gujarat in the eighteenth century. The contested yet mutually beneficial relations between traders and political authorities also continued to develop in subsequent times. In a sense, the paradoxical relationship of coexistence, set up as early as the twelfth century, between the pacifist and vegetarian ideologies of Jaina and Vaiṣṇava merchants and the martial or martial-pastoralist traditions of the political formations continued to determine the polarities of Gujarati politics, perhaps even to this day.

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Two main threads run through the foregoing pages. First is the argument that for this period and region, the histories and source materials emanating from different religious or social groups cannot be dealt with in isolation from each other as they can only offer a partial picture. Correspondingly, juxtaposing these sources is vital to explicating social and political relations. While it would not be true to say that a recognition of religious difference did not exist in texts, a binary division between 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' source materials is irrelevant and misleading. This is partly because both identities were in the process of being constructed in our period and several groups had not yet chosen literary forms that were identifiably sectarian. Thus, Muslim merchants and courtiers sometimes chose Sanskrit compositions in inscriptions and texts while Hindu poets used a Persianate metres and vocabulary in their compositions, choices that were dictated more by the purpose and audience of the text than sectarian considerations.

Secondly, in the case of Gujarat but perhaps in other regions too, politics cannot be viewed in isolation from trade. In the period of our interest, merchants and rulers recognised a mutual interest in maintaining the prosperity of Gujarat and politics tended to be bracketed by the need to safeguard it. This is thus a study of a regional culture seen as an organic whole that seeks to bring out the multiple processes involved in bringing together a region and a regional political order.

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